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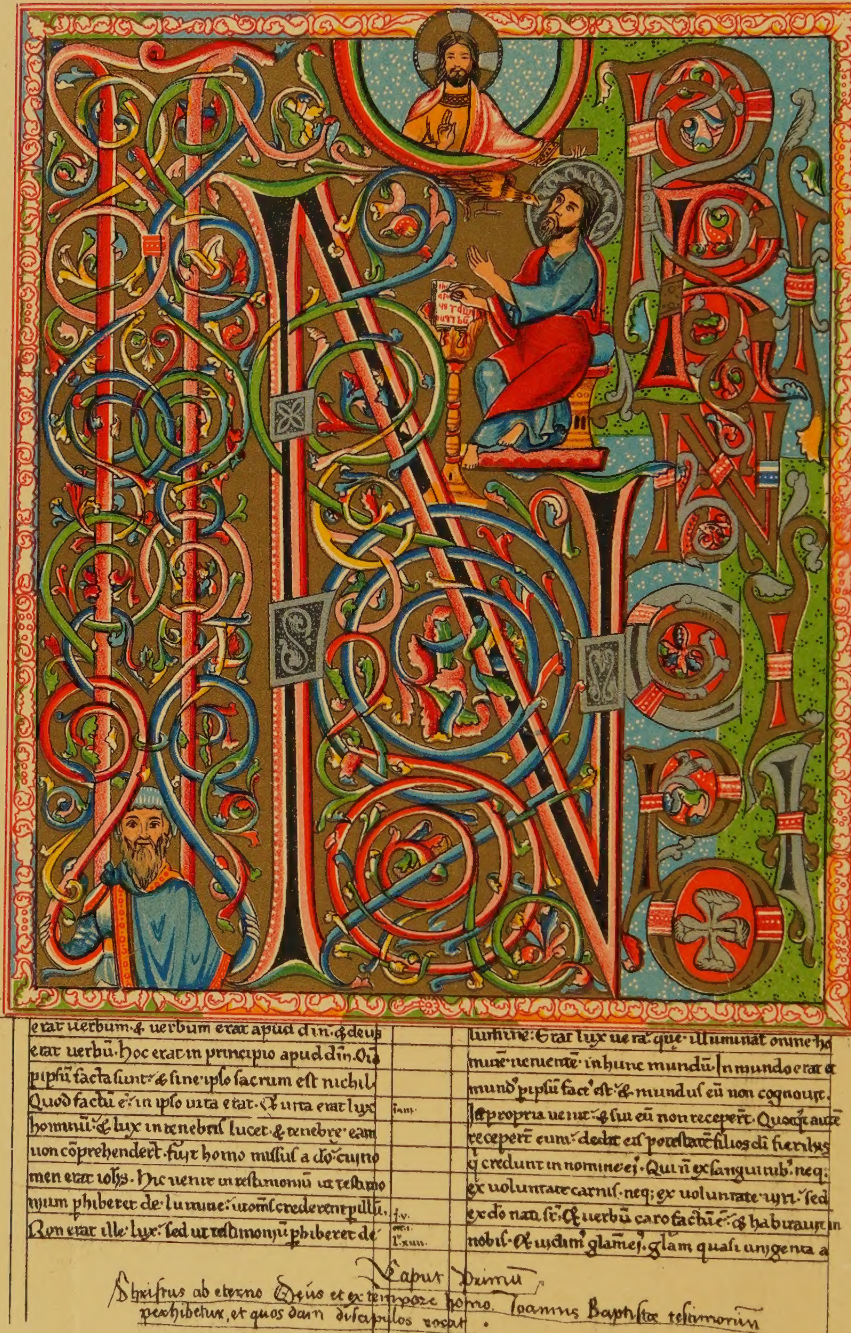

erat uerbum. & uerbum erat apud dm̄. & deus
erat uerbū. Hoc erat in principio apud dm̄. Om̄
per ipſū facta ſunt: & ſine ipſo factum est nichil.
Quod factū ē: in ipſo uita erat. & uita erat lux i.iiii.
hominū. & lux in tenebris lucet. & tenebre eam
non cōprehenderūt. Fuit homo miſſus a dō: cuius no
men erat iohs. Hic uenit in teſtimoniū ut teſtimo
nium phiberet de lumine: ut om̄s crederent per illū. j.v.
Non erat ille lux: ſed ut teſtimoniū phiberet de l.xiii.
lumine: Erat lux uera: que illuminat omnē ho
minē uenientē in hunc mundū. In mundo erat &
mundus per ipſū fact' est: & mundus eū non cognouit.
In propria uenit: & ſui eū non receperūt. Quotquot autē
receperūt eum: dedit eis poteſtatē filios dī fieri his
qui credunt in nomine ei. Qui nō ex ſanguinib; neq;
ex uoluntate carnis. neq; ex uoluntate uiri. ſed
ex dō nati ſūt. & uerbū caro factū ē: & habitauit in
nobis. & uidim' gloriā ei'. gloriā quaſi unigeniti a

Caput Primū

Christus ab eterno Deus et ex tempore homo. Joannes Baptistae testimonium perhibetur, et quos dam discipulos vocat.

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FORTY-FIVE VOLUMES

VOL. XXXV.

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ROBERT SOUTHEY.

ROBERT SOUTHEY

(1774-1843)

If it were possible to earn a place among the immortals by the force of unremitting toil, no man of letters could have a clearer claim to the distinction than Robert Southey. The vast labors of his life, seconding talents of no mean order, did indeed build for him a reputation which cannot be destroyed by time. What the author of 'Thalaba' and the 'Life of Nelson' accomplished, has a definite and solid value. Within his limits he did his life's work well. He was a good and faithful servant of literature: had he had more of the mastery of genius, he would have been less in bondage to his conceptions. As it was, he was fettered by the schemes for his vast epics and interminable histories. The element of drudgery dulls even the greatest of his works. He is among English men of letters as one that serveth.

His life touched at many points the lives of other noted men; yet it was ever self-contained, closed in against all passions but the one devouring passion for culture. There was a Southey who, feeling the electric currents of the revolution, dreamed of brotherhood and freedom in the forests of America: but the Southey of literary history spent his life among his thousands of beloved books in the quiet rooms of Greta Hall, content with the use and wont of the Old World; content to perform, year in and year out, the daily tasks of composition, proof-reading, and letter-writing. The poet had become the sober writer of prose; the revolutionist had become the conservative.

Robert Southey was born on the 12th of August, 1774. His father, a linen draper, being unsuccessful in his business, the care and support of the boy was partly assumed by his mother's maiden aunt, Miss Tyler,—an eccentric woman, who was wise enough however to feed her charge's mind with such tales as 'Goody Two-Shoes' and the 'History of the Seven Champions of England'; she further trained the future poet in the way he should go, by taking him to the theatre, and by allowing him to enter into the enchanted world of Beaumont and Fletcher, and to wander along the broad human highways of Shakespeare.

He was early taken from these most beautiful and tender nurses of genius, and delivered over to schoolmasters to be "regularly" educated. Great institutions of learning do not always know how to conduct the education of a poet. Westminster School rejected Southey after four years of nurture, because the boy wrote a sarcastic article on flogging, for the paper published by the pupils. Two enduring friendships, however, were formed at Westminster: one with Grosvenor Bedford, the other with C. W. Wynn. It was through the liberality of the latter that an annuity of £160 was for many years settled upon Southey. Through provision made by his uncle, the Rev. Mr. Hill, chaplain to the British factory at Lisbon, Southey was enabled to go to Oxford. Christ Church rejected him because of the Westminster episode, but he was received at Balliol.

In 1794 occurred an event of much importance in his life: he met Coleridge. With the mystical poet, «voyaging on strange seas of thought alone,» the young Southey had much in common. They were both under the domination of the republican spirit; they had both looked to France for the dawn of the social millennium, and had beheld only the terrors of the midnight tempest. They both dreamed of a world made over nearer to the heart's desire. Coleridge had already formulated his dreams. They should go to America: there in the virgin forests they could free themselves forever from the pernicious social system of the Old World. They would live as brothers. Each would till the soil, living by the work of his own hands. Each would take with him a wife who should share the toil and the blessings. They would rear their children in innocence and peace. They would live the ideal life of study and of manual labor in the bosom of nature. Their community would be a «pantisocracy.» Coleridge and Southey had friends ready and willing to make the venture,—Robert Lovell, a young Quaker; Robert Allen, and George Burnett. Lovell's wife had four sisters,—Edith, Sarah, Martha, and Elizabeth Fricker. An idea prevailed among the pantisocrats that these ladies might be married off-hand, the only inducement necessary being a glowing description of the land of promise. Southey, however, had another object in marrying than the good of the new community. He loved Edith Fricker, and she returned his affection.

Nothing was lacking now to the perfect success of the scheme but money. The young enthusiasts were rich in dreams, but poor in pocket. Coleridge never had money in his life. The others, being also of the poetical temperament, could never have much of it. Southey and Coleridge began a series of lectures, the one on history, the other on ethics and politics, for the sake of raising the necessary funds. About this time Southey met Joseph Cottle, a Bristol bookseller, whose sincere friendship manifested itself in substantial forms. Two years before, in 1794, Southey had written an epic, ‹Joan of Arc,› in which he had embodied his democratic fervor. Cottle bought this of him for fifty guineas, and published it in 1796. The assistance was timely; for the young poet was in disgrace with Miss Tyler, who had cast him out on the news of his intended marriage with Miss Fricker.

Soon after the publication of 'Joan of Arc,' Southey's uncle, Mr. Hill, arrived from Lisbon; having heard of his nephew's vagaries, and believing that a change of scene would bring about a change of mind, he induced him to return with him. On the day of his departure he was secretly married to Edith. He returned, cured of pantisocracy, but with his mind full of poetical schemes: epics galore, tragedies and comedies and romances, which were to be wrought out one by one. Among the first of these to be completed was 'Madoc,' a narrative poem of the adventures of a Welsh prince of the twelfth century in the wilderness of America. He had been meanwhile for a year in London crucifying his spirit over law-books. After leaving London and the law, he wandered through England for a time, finally settling at Norwich, where he spent twelve months. The breaking down of his health led to a second visit to Portugal, on which his wife accompanied him. On his return he was offered the position of private secretary to Mr. Corry, Chancellor of the Exchequer for Ireland. He accepted it; but the post not proving a congenial one, he soon returned to England, and not long afterwards took up his abode in Greta Hall, Keswick, in the English Lake region, where he was to spend the remainder of his life,— supporting himself, his family, and Coleridge's family, by his incessant literary labors.

It is in the household of Greta Hall that the greater Southey, Southey the man, comes into clear view; he is seen here as the loving father and husband, as the kind kinsman of the Coleridge children, as the friend ever ready with words of sympathy, advice, and encouragement. A remarkable family of children was gathered under his roof. There were his own brilliant, beautiful Herbert, Edith May, Bertha, Kate, and Isabel; there was the marvelous child, the elfish Hartley Coleridge; there were also his brother Derwent, and Sara Coleridge, who had inherited not a small share of her father's genius. There was besides a large colony of cats, whose high-sounding names Southey has recorded in his 'Chronicle History of the Cattery of Cat's Eden.'

In 1813 Southey was appointed to the office of Poet Laureate, made vacant by the death of Pye. At that date his more important works included his metrical romance of 'Thalaba the Destroyer,' the romance of 'Amadis de Gaul' from a Spanish version, 'The Chronicle of the Cid,' 'The Curse of Kehama,' 'Espriella's Letters,' and the 'History of Portugal' begun but not finished. In 1807 he had produced 'Specimens of the Later English Poets,' and 'Palmerin of

Portugal,' a translation from the Portuguese. His Poet-Laureateship was the recognition of his youthful work. Southey seems to have renounced poetry with his republicanism. The odes which he wrote in his official character are forced in tone, and with exception of the 'Funeral Song for the Princess Charlotte,' commonplace. After taking up his abode in Greta Hall, Southey devoted himself chiefly to prose composition. He wrote there his 'History of Brazil,' his 'History of Portugal,' his lives of Wesley, of Cowper, and of Nelson, his commonplace books, his 'History of the Peninsular War,' and that charming book of gossip, 'The Doctor.' His prose is masterly, direct, and even. His claim to be numbered among the foremost English men of letters rests indeed upon his prose.

The events of his life at Keswick are chiefly those of a student and a scholar. For many years it was necessary that he should write incessantly, performing his day-labor like a workman in the fields. After this necessity was removed, he still toiled on, finding his greatest pleasure in the companionship of his books, and of his friends, among whom were Charles Lamb, Wordsworth, and Landor. His reputation attracted to him men of the highest intellectual rank; even one man as far removed from him in thought and feeling as the poet Shelley. Southey was never slow to recognize genius and to befriend it; but with certain literary movements in England he had little sympathy. His designation of Byron and his coterie as the «Satanic School» was not the least just, as it was the most unfriendly, of his criticisms. For the work of Wordsworth, of Landor, and of Lamb, he had unqualified admiration.

In 1816 Southey was offered a baronetcy through the influence of Sir Robert Peel; but he declined the honor. In 1826 he was offered a seat in Parliament, and an estate to qualify him for the office; but this he also declined. Oxford conferred upon him the degree of LL. D.; he refused a similar honor from Cambridge.

His later years were darkened by domestic afflictions. The light of his life went out when his son Herbert, a child of the rarest promise, passed away. His second marriage in 1839, to the writer Caroline Anne Bowles, was one of convenience. For a year or two before his death the vigor of his faculties was almost wholly departed. He died on the 21st of March, 1843, literally worn out by brain labor.

As Mr. Dowden, in his life of Southey, points out, the literary career of the poet falls into two periods: a period during which he devoted himself chiefly to poetry, and a later period during which prose occupied the first place.

Southey's poetry is not of the first rank. It is too intentional and well-ordered. He had not the imagination to cope with the subject-matter of his epics,—which, as in 'Thalaba' and 'Kehama,' is taken from wild Arabian legends, or as in ‹Roderick,› from the dim rich pages of mediæval chronicle. His simple, serious spirit expresses itself most adequately in his ballads, and in such poems as ‹The Battle of Blenheim,› ‹The Complaints of the Poor,› and in the quiet, measured verse of the ‹Inscriptions.› His prose has more of the light of inspiration. Its sustained, sober excellence is well adapted to the long-drawn-out impersonal narratives which Southey could handle with so much skill and ease. He united the patience of the mediæval chronicler with the culture of the modern historian. He wrote, in the sober temper of the scholar, of «old, unhappy, far-off things, and battles long ago.» For him the fever had departed from them. He was not a dramatist in his conception of history. What had been done had been done, and he recorded it impassionately. Yet he was not without keen sympathies, as his ‹Life of Cowper› and his ‹Life of Nelson› show. Southey as a biographer reveals his own high standards of life, his love of equity, his appreciation of noble achievement wherever found, his belief in character as the basis of well-being. He himself was altogether true-hearted. The manliness which pervades all his works makes large compensation for the lack of the divine spark of genius.

THE HOLLY-TREE

O READER! hast thou ever stood to see
The Holly-tree?
The eye that contemplates it well perceives
Its glossy leaves,
Ordered by an Intelligence so wise
As might confound the Atheist's sophistries.

Below a circling fence its leaves are seen,
Wrinkled and keen;
No grazing cattle through their prickly round
Can reach to wound;
But as they grow where nothing is to fear,
Smooth and unarmed the pointless leaves appear.

I love to view these things with curious eyes,
And moralize;
And in this wisdom of the Holly-tree
Can emblem see
Wherewith perchance to make a pleasant rhyme,
One which may profit in the after-time.

Thus though abroad perchance I might appear
Harsh and austere,
To those who on my leisure would intrude
Reserved and rude,—
Gentle at home amid my friends I'd be,
Like the high leaves upon the Holly-tree.

And should my youth — as youth is apt, I know —
Some harshness show,
All vain asperities I day by day
Would wear away,
Till the smooth temper of my age should be
Like the high leaves upon the Holly-tree.

And as, when all the summer trees are seen
So bright and green,
The Holly leaves a sober hue display
Less bright than they,
But when the bare and wintry woods we see,
What then so cheerful as the Holly-tree?—

So serious should my youth appear among
The thoughtless throng;
So would I seem, amid the young and gay,
More grave than they,
That in my age as cheerful I might be
As the green winter of the Holly-tree.

STANZAS WRITTEN IN MY LIBRARY

My days among the Dead are passed;
Around me I behold,
Where'er these casual eyes are cast,
The mighty minds of old;
My never-failing friends are they,
With whom I converse day by day.

With them I take delight in weal,
And seek relief in woe;
And while I understand and feel
How much to them I owe,
My cheeks have often been bedewed
With tears of thoughtful gratitude.

My thoughts are with the Dead; with them
I live in long-past years,
Their virtues love, their faults condemn,
Partake their hopes and fears,
And from their lessons seek and find
Instruction with a humble mind.

My hopes are with the Dead: anon
My place with them will be,
And I with them shall travel on
Through all futurity;
Yet leaving here a name, I trust,
That will not perish in the dust.

THE INCHCAPE ROCK

No stir in the air, no stir in the sea:
The ship was still as she could be;
Her sails from heaven received no motion;
Her keel was steady in the ocean.

Without either sign or sound of their shock,
The waves flowed over the Inchcape Rock;
So little they rose, so little they fell,
They did not move the Inchcape Bell.

The Abbot of Aberbrothok
Had placed that Bell on the Inchcape Rock;
On a buoy in the storm it floated and swung,
And over the waves its warning rung.

When the Rock was hid by the surge's swell,
The mariners heard the warning Bell;
And then they knew the perilous Rock,
And blest the Abbot of Aberbrothok.

The sun in heaven was shining gay;
All things were joyful on that day;
The sea-birds screamed as they wheeled round,
And there was joyance in their sound.

The buoy of the Inchcape Bell was seen,
A darker speck on the ocean green:
Sir Ralph the Rover walked his deck,
And he fixed his eye on the darker speck.

He felt the cheering power of spring;
It made him whistle, it made him sing:
His heart was mirthful to excess,
But the Rover's mirth was wickedness.

His eye was on the Inchcape float;
Quoth he, "My men, put out the boat,
And row me to the Inchcape Rock,
And I'll plague the Abbot of Aberbrothok."

The boat is lowered, the boatmen row,
And to the Inchcape Rock they go;
Sir Ralph bent over from the boat,
And he cut the Bell from the Inchcape float.

Down sunk the Bell with a gurgling sound;
The bubbles rose and burst around:
Quoth Sir Ralph, "The next who comes to the Rock
Won't bless the Abbot of Aberbrothok."

Sir Ralph the Rover sailed away;
He scoured the seas for many a day:
And now, grown rich with plundered store,
He steers his course for Scotland's shore.

So thick a haze o'erspreads the sky,
They cannot see the sun on high:
The wind hath blown a gale all day;
At evening it hath died away.

On the deck the Rover takes his stand;
So dark it is, they see no land.
Quoth Sir Ralph, "It will be lighter soon,
For there is the dawn of the rising moon."

"Canst hear," said one, "the breakers roar?
For methinks we should be near the shore." —
"Now where we are I cannot tell,
But I wish I could hear the Inchcape Bell."

They hear no sound; the swell is strong;
Though the wind hath fallen, they drift along,
Till the vessel strikes with a shivering shock:
"O Christ! it is the Inchcape Rock!"

Sir Ralph the Rover tore his hair,
He curst himself in his despair:

The waves rush in on every side;
The ship is sinking beneath the tide.

But even in his dying fear,
One dreadful sound could the Rover hear,—
A sound as if, with the Inchcape Bell,
The Devil below was ringing his knell.

THE BATTLE OF BLENHEIM

It was a summer evening;
  Old Kaspar's work was done,
And he before his cottage door
  Was sitting in the sun;
And by him sported on the green
His little grandchild Wilhelmine.

She saw her brother Peterkin
  Roll something large and round,
Which he beside the rivulet
  In playing there had found;
He came to ask what he had found,
That was so large and smooth and round.

Old Kaspar took it from the boy,
  Who stood expectant by;
And then the old man shook his head,
  And with a natural sigh,—
«'Tis some poor fellow's skull,» said he,
«Who fell in the great victory.

«I find them in the garden,
  For there's many hereabout;
And often when I go to plow,
  The plowshare turns them out:
For many thousand men,» said he,
«Were slain in that great victory.»

«Now tell us what 'twas all about,»
  Young Peterkin he cries;—
And little Wilhelmine looks up
  With wonder-waiting eyes;—
«Now tell us all about the war,
And what they fought each other for.»

«It was the English,» Kaspar cried,
«Who put the French to rout;
But what they fought each other for,
I could not well make out:
But everybody said,» quoth he,
«That 'twas a famous victory.

«My father lived at Blenheim then,
Yon little stream hard by:
They burnt his dwelling to the ground,
And he was forced to fly;
So with his wife and child he fled,
Nor had he where to rest his head.

«With fire and sword the country round
Was wasted far and wide;
And many a childing mother then,
And new-born baby, died:
But things like that, you know, must be
At every famous victory.

«They say it was a shocking sight
After the field was won;
For many thousand bodies here
Lay rotting in the sun:
But things like that, you know, must be,
After a famous victory.

«Great praise the Duke of Marlborough won,
And our good Prince Eugene.»
«Why, 'twas a very wicked thing!»
Said little Wilhelmine.
«Nay, nay, my little girl,» quoth he:
«It was a famous victory,

«And everybody praised the Duke,
Who this great fight did win.»
«But what good came of it at last?»
Quoth little Peterkin.
«Why, that I cannot tell,» said he;
«But 'twas a famous victory.»

THE OLD WOMAN OF BERKELEY

A Ballad, Showing How an Old Woman Rode Double, and Who Rode Before Her

The Raven croaked as she sate at her meal,
And the Old Woman knew what he said:
And she grew pale at the Raven's tale,
And sickened, and went to her bed.

«Now fetch me my children, and fetch them with speed,»
The Old Woman of Berkeley said;
«The Monk my son, and my daughter the Nun,
Bid them hasten, or I shall be dead.»

The Monk her son, and her daughter the Nun,
Their way to Berkeley went;
And they have brought, with pious thought,
The holy sacrament.

The Old Woman shrieked as they entered her door,
And she cried with a voice of despair,
«Now take away the sacrament,
For its presence I cannot bear!»

Her lip it trembled with agony;
The sweat ran down her brow:
«I have tortures in store for evermore;
But spare me, my children, now!»

Away they sent the sacrament:
The fit it left her weak;
She looked at her children with ghastly eyes,
And faintly struggled to speak.

«All kind of sin I have rioted in,
And the judgment now must be;
But I secured my children's souls:
Oh, pray, my children, for me!

«I have 'nointed myself with infants' fat;
The fiends have been my slaves;
From sleeping babes I have sucked the breath;
And breaking by charms the sleep of death,
I have called the dead from their graves.

"And the Devil will fetch me now in fire,
My witchcrafts to atone;
And I, who have troubled the dead man's grave,
Shall never have rest in my own.

"Bless, I entreat, my winding-sheet,
My children, I beg of you;
And with holy-water sprinkle my shroud,
And sprinkle my coffin too.

"And let me be chained in my coffin of stone;
And fasten it strong, I implore,
With iron bars, and with three chains
Chain it to the church-floor.

"And bless the chains, and sprinkle them;
And let fifty Priests stand round,
Who night and day the Mass may say
Where I lie on the ground.

"And see that fifty Choristers
Beside the bier attend me,
And day and night, by the tapers' light,
With holy hymns defend me.

"Let the church-bells all, both great and small,
Be tolled by night and day,
To drive from thence the fiends who come
To bear my body away.

"And ever have the church-door barred
After the even-song;
And I beseech you, children dear,
Let the bars and bolts be strong.

"And let this be three days and nights,
My wretched corpse to save;
Till the fourth morning keep me safe,
And then I may rest in my grave."

The Old Woman of Berkeley laid her down,
And her eyes grew deadly dim;
Short came her breath, and the struggle of death
Did loosen every limb.

They blest the Old Woman's winding-sheet
With rites and prayers due;

With holy-water they sprinkled her shroud,
And they sprinkled her coffin too.

And they chained her in her coffin of stone,
And with iron barred it down,
And in the church with three strong chains
They chained it to the ground.

And they blest the chains, and sprinkled them;
And fifty Priests stood round,
By night and day the Mass to say
Where she lay on the ground.

And fifty sacred Choristers
Beside the bier attend her,
Who day and night, by the tapers' light,
Should with holy hymns defend her.

To see the Priests and Choristers
It was a goodly sight,
Each holding, as it were a staff,
A taper burning bright.

And the church-bells all, both great and small,
Did toll so loud and long;
And they have barred the church-door hard,
After the even-song.

And the first night the tapers' light
Burnt steadily and clear;
But they without a hideous rout
Of angry fiends could hear;—

A hideous roar at the church-door,
Like a long thunder-peal;
And the Priests they prayed, and the Choristers sung
Louder, in fearful zeal.

Loud tolled the bell; the Priests prayed well;
The tapers they burnt bright:
The Monk her son, and her daughter the Nun,
They told their beads all night.

The cock he crew; the Fiends they flew
From the voice of the morning away:
Then undisturbed the Choristers sing,
And the fifty Priests they pray;

As they had sung and prayed all night,
They prayed and sung all day.

The second night the tapers' light
Burnt dismally and blue,
And every one saw his neighbor's face
Like a dead man's face to view.

And yells and cries without arise,
That the stoutest heart might shock,
And a deafening roaring like a cataract pouring
Over a mountain rock.

The Monk and Nun they told their beads
As fast as they could tell;
And aye as louder grew the noise,
The faster went the bell.

Louder and louder the Choristers sung,
As they trembled more and more;
And the Priests, as they prayed to Heaven for aid,
They smote their breasts full sore.

The cock he crew; the Fiends they flew
From the voice of the morning away:
Then undisturbed the Choristers sing,
And the fifty Priests they pray;
As they had sung and prayed all night,
They prayed and sung all day.

The third night came, and the tapers' flame
A frightful stench did make;
And they burnt as though they had been dipped
In the burning brimstone lake.

And the loud commotion, like the rushing of ocean,
Grew momently more and more;
And strokes as of a battering-ram
Did shake the strong church-door.

The bellmen they for very fear
Could toll the bell no longer;
And still, as louder grew the strokes,
Their fear it grew the stronger.

The Monk and Nun forgot their beads;
They fell on the ground in dismay;

There was not a single Saint in heaven
To whom they did not pray.

And the Choristers' song, which late was so strong,
Faltered with consternation;
For the church did rock as an earthquake shock
Uplifted its foundation.

And a sound was heard like the trumpet's blast
That shall one day wake the dead;—
The strong church-door could bear no more,
And the bolts and bars they fled;

And the tapers' light was extinguished quite;
And the Choristers faintly sung;
And the Priests, dismayed, panted and prayed,
And on all Saints in heaven for aid
They called with trembling tongue.

And in He came with eyes of flame,
The Devil, to fetch the dead;
And all the church with his presence glowed
Like a fiery furnace red.

He laid his hand on the iron chains,
And like flax they moldered asunder;
And the coffin lid, which was barred so firm,
He burst with his voice of thunder.

And he bade the Old Woman of Berkeley rise,
And come with her Master away:
A cold sweat started on that cold corpse,
At the voice she was forced to obey.

She rose on her feet in her winding-sheet;
Her dead flesh quivered with fear;
And a groan like that which the Old Woman gave
Never did mortal hear.

She followed her Master to the church-door
There stood a black horse there;
His breath was red like furnace smoke,
His eyes like a meteor's glare.

The Devil he flung her on the horse,
And he leaped up before·

And away like the lightning's speed they went,
    And she was seen no more.

They saw her no more: but her cries
    For four miles round they could hear;
And children at rest at their mother's breast
    Started, and screamed with fear.

THE CURSE

From 'The Curse of Kehama'

I charm thy life
    From the weapons of strife,
    From stone and from wood,
  From fire and from flood,
    From the serpent's tooth,
  And the beasts of blood;
From Sickness I charm thee,
And Time shall not harm thee:
  But Earth, which is mine,
  Its fruits shall deny thee;
  And Water shall hear me,
  And know thee and fly thee;
And the Winds shall not touch thee
  When they pass by thee,
And the Dews shall not wet thee
  When they fall nigh thee:
  And thou shalt seek Death
  To release thee, in vain;
  Thou shalt live in thy pain,
  While Kehama shall reign,
    With a fire in thy heart,
  And a fire in thy brain;
  And Sleep shall obey me,
    And visit thee never,
And the Curse shall be on thee
    Forever and ever.

ÉMILE SOUVESTRE

(1806-1854)

In 1854, the year of Émile Souvestre's death in Paris, the French Academy awarded to his widow the Lambert prize,— a testimonial to the memory of the most useful writer. The principal work to win him this distinction—'Le Philosophe sous les Toits,'—was not a piece of brilliant creation, not a learned treatise, but a sweet-spirited little volume of reflections upon daily life. Upon its appearance in 1851 the Academy crowned it; and in translation, 'The Attic Philosopher' has long been esteemed by English readers. The philosopher was Souvestre himself, who knew poverty and hard work all his life; and accepting both with contagious courage and cheerfulness, advised his readers to make the best of whatever came.

He tested this philosophy. Born at Morlaix in Finisterre in 1806, he passed his childhood and youth there; and grew intimately familiar with Breton life and scenery. Next he studied law at Rennes, where he tried unsuccessfully to practice. He was about twenty-four when he went to Paris, hoping to make his way in literature. It has been said that in Paris every would-be author is forced to discover his own value; and after a stay there, many retire in sad self-knowledge. Souvestre was stimulated by the richer intellectual life. His individuality was too strong to be submerged. He remained a thorough Breton,— distance giving him a more definite appreciation of his early home.

The sudden death of his brother, a sea captain, made him the only support of his family; and he was obliged to return to Brittany, where he became clerk in a large publishing-house at Nantes. During the next uncertain years he wrote short articles for local journals. For a time he was associated with a M. Papot in the management of a school. He then became editor of a Brest newspaper. In 1835 he returned to Paris, where his Breton tales soon made him a name. During his comparatively short life of forty-eight years he wrote more than forty books, comprising plays, short stories, and historical works.

Like his great compatriot, the early realist Le Sage, one of Souvestre's primary qualities was clear common-sense. Usual, universal sentiments appealed to him more than romantic eccentricities. Like another great Breton, Ernest Renan, he was deeply occupied with the question of religion. His stories, most of which reflect Breton life, are often true tales told him by the peasants; and all have the qualities of reality and religious feeling.

His greatest work, ‘Les Derniers Bretons,’ was an exposition of Breton life, with all its traditions, sentiments, and modes of thought and action. He felt that many tales traditionary among the poor were in danger of being lost; and he hated to see them die from the people's memory. He felt too that this folk-lore was of historical value as a spontaneous revelation of a mental and moral attitude. As he points out, the Eastern fairy tale, full of gorgeous color and material delight, has little in common with the Breton tales, with their curious mingling of shrewdness and sentiment, their positive concern over and belief in the reward of virtue and retribution of sin. Both compositions reflect their authors. In his ‘Le Foyer Breton,’—a collection of folk-lore tales,—he preserved as far as possible the traditional form of expression. They are full of local saws and allusions; many are genuine fairy tales, in which kindly and practical fairies, by removing a series of obstacles, render young lovers happy. Others evince a true Breton delight in the weird and grotesque, and narrate the horrible fate of those who brave evil spirits in accursed spots at midnight.

THE WASHERWOMEN OF NIGHT

From ‘Le Foyer Breton’

The Bretons are children of transgression like the rest, but they love their dead; they pity those who burn in Purgatory, and try to ransom them from the fire of probation. Every Sunday after mass, they pray for their souls on the spot where their poor bodies perished.

It is especially in the black month [November] that they perform this Christian act. When the forerunner of winter comes [All-Saints' Day], every one thinks of those who have gone to the judgment of God. They have masses said at the altar of the dead, they light candles to them, they confide them to the best saints, they take the little children to their tombs; and after vespers, the rector comes out of church to bless their graves.

It is also upon this night that Christ grants some solace to the dead, and permits them to revisit the homes in which they lived. There are then as many dead in the houses of the living as there are yellow leaves in the rough roads. Therefore true Christians leave the table-cloth spread and the fire lighted, that the dead may take their meals, and warm the limbs stiffened by the cold of cemeteries.

But if there are true adorers of the Virgin and her Son, there are also the children of the Black Angel [the Devil], who forget those who have been nearest their hearts. Wilherm Postik was one of the latter. His father had quitted life without having received absolution; and as the proverb says, « Kadion is always the son of his father.» Therefore he cared only for forbidden pleasures, danced during church-time when he could, and drank during mass with beggarly horse-jockeys. Yet God had not failed to send him warnings. In one year he had seen an ill wind strike his mother, his sisters, and his wife; but he had consoled himself for their deaths by inheriting their property.

The rector vainly warned him in sermon, that he was a subject of scandal to all the parish. Far from correcting Wilherm, this public advice had only the result of making him give up church, as might easily have been foreseen; for it is not by snapping the whip one brings back a runaway horse. So he set about living more as he chose than ever,—as faithless and lawless as a fox in the brush.

Now it happened in that time that the fine days came to an end, and the feast of the dead arrived. All baptized folk put on their mourning-garments, and went to church to pray for the dead; but Wilherm dressed himself in his best, and took the road to the neighboring town.

All the time the others spent in relieving souls in pain, he passed there drinking brandy with the sailors, and singing verses composed by the millers [*i. e.*, coarse songs]. He did this until nearly midnight; and did not think of returning until the others grew weary of wrong-doing. He had an iron constitution for pleasure; and he left the inn the last one, as steady and active as when he had entered.

But his heart was hot with drink. He sang aloud along the road, songs which usually even the boldest would only whisper; he passed the crucifixes without lowering his voice or lifting his hat; and he struck the thickets of broom with his stick right and left, without fear of wounding the souls which fill the ways upon that day.

He thus reached a crossway from which there were two paths to his village. The longer was under the protection of God, while the shorter was haunted by the dead. Many people crossing it by night had heard noises and seen things of which they did not speak, except when with others and within reach of holy-water. But Wilherm feared only thirst; therefore he took the shortest path, where his clogs clattered on the pebbles.

Now the night was moonless; the wind rattled down the leaves, the springs rolled sadly along the bank, the bushes shivered like a man in fear; and in the silence, Wilherm's steps sounded like those of giants: but nothing frightened him, and he kept on.

As he passed the old ruined manor, he heard the weathercock, which said to him:—

«Go back, go back, go back!»

Wilherm went on his way. He reached the cascade, and the water murmured:—

«Do not pass, do not pass, do not pass!»

He set his foot on the stones polished by the stream, and crossed. As he reached a worm-eaten oak, the wind whistling through the branches repeated:—

«Stay here, stay here, stay here!»

But Wilherm struck the dead tree with his stick, and hurried on.

At last he entered the haunted valley. Midnight sounded from three parishes. Wilherm began to whistle the tune of 'Marionnik.' But just as he was whistling the fourth verse, he heard the sound of a cart, and saw it coming towards him covered with a pall.

Wilherm recognized the hearse. It was drawn by six black horses, and driven by the «Ankon» [phantom of death], who held an iron whip and repeated ceaselessly:—

«Turn aside, or I will overturn you.»

Wilherm made way for him without being disconcerted.

«What are you doing here, Paleface?» he demanded boldly.

«I seize and I surprise,» answered the Ankon.

«So you are a robber and a traitor?» went on Wilherm.

«I strike without look or thought.»

«That is, like a fool or a brute. But why are you in such a hurry to-day?»

«I am seeking Wilherm Postik,» answered the phantom, passing by.

The merry Wilherm burst out laughing, and went on.

As he reached the little hedge of blackthorn which led to the washing-place, he saw two women in white who were hanging linen on the bushes.

« Upon my life! here are some girls who are not afraid of the dew,» said he. « Why are you out so late, little doves? »

« We are washing, we are drying, we are sewing,» answered the two women at once.

« But what? » asked the young man.

« The shroud of a dead man who still talks and walks.»

«A dead man! My faith! What is his name? »

« Wilherm Postik.»

The fellow laughed louder than at first, and went on down the rough little path. But as he advanced, he heard more and more distinctly the blows of wooden beetles against the stones; and soon he could see the washerwomen of night pounding their grave-clothes, as they sang the sad refrain:—

« Unless a Christian our doom can stay,
Until Judgment Day we must wash away;
To the sound of the wind, in the moon's pale light,
We must wash and wash our grave-clothes white.»

As soon as they saw the merry fellow, all cried out and ran up to him, offering him their winding-sheets and asking him to wring them out.

« That's too trifling a service to be refused among friends,» answered Wilherm gayly: « but one at a time, fair washerwomen; a man has only two hands for wringing as well as for embracing.»

Then he set down his stick, and took the end of the shroud which one of the dead women offered him; being careful to twist the same way she did, for he had learned from old people that thus only could he escape being broken to pieces.

But as the shroud was thus turning, behold, the other washerwomen surrounded Wilherm; and he recognized his aunt, his wife, his mother, and his sisters. They all cried, «A thousand curses on him who lets his people burn in hell! A thousand curses!» And they shook their thin hair, lifting their white beetles; and from all the washing-places of the valley, from the moors above, from all the hedges, voices repeated, «A thousand curses! a thousand curses!»

Wilherm, frightened out of his wits, felt his hair standing up on his head. In his dismay, he forgot the precaution he had taken until then, and began to wring the other way. At the very same instant, the shroud pressed his hands like a vise, and he fell crushed by the iron arms of the washerwoman.

At daybreak, while passing the washing-place, a young girl from Henvik named Fantik ar Fur, stopping to put a branch of holly in her pitcher of fresh milk, saw Wilherm stretched on the blue stones. She thought that brandy had overcome him there, and plucking a rush, drew near to waken him; but seeing that he remained motionless, she was frightened, and ran to the village to give the alarm. The people came with the rector, the bell-ringer, and the notary who was also the mayor. The body was lifted and placed on an ox-cart: but every time the blessed candles were lighted they went out, so it was evident that Wilherm Postik had gone to damnation; and his body was placed outside the cemetery, under the stone wall, where dogs and unbelievers rest.

THE FOUR GIFTS

From ‹Le Foyer Breton›

If I had an income of three hundred crowns, I would go to live at Quimper, where there is the finest church of Cornouaille, and where there are weather-vanes on the roofs of the houses. If I had two hundred crowns, I would dwell at Carhaix, on account of its game and the sheep on its heath. But if I had only a hundred crowns, I should want to keep house at Pont-Aven, for there is the greatest abundance of everything. At Pont-Aven you may have the butter for the price of the milk, the chicken for the price of the egg, the linen for the price of the green flax.

Thus one sees good farms there; where salt pork is served three times a week, and where even the shepherds eat as much bread mixed of wheat and rye as they like.

In one of these farms lived Barbaïk Bourhis,— a brave-hearted woman, who supported her house as if she had been a man, and who owned fields and crops enough to keep two sons at school.

Now Barbaïk had one niece who earned more than her keep cost; so she was able to put the gains of each day with those of the day before.

But savings too easily won always beget some plague. By heaping up wheat you draw rats to your barns, and by hoarding crowns you beget avarice in your heart. Old Bourhis had come to care for nothing except increasing her property, and to esteem those only who paid a large sum to the collector every month. So she looked angry whenever she saw Dénès, the day-laborer from Plover, chatting with her niece behind the gable. One morning when she had surprised them again, she cried harshly to Téphany:—

«Isn't it a shame that you should be chatting all the time like this, with a young man who hasn't anything, when there are so many others who would gladly buy you a silver ring?»

«Dénès is a good worker, and a true Christian,» answered the young girl. «Some day or other he will find a farm to rent, where he can bring up children.»

«And you want to be their mother?» interrupted the old woman. «God forbid! I would rather see you in the door-yard well than this vagabond's wife. No, no: it shall never be said that I brought up my sister's daughter only to have her marry a man who could put his whole fortune in his tobacco pouch.»

«What matters fortune when one has health, and when the Virgin can read our intentions?» answered Téphany gently.

«What matters fortune!» repeated the scandalized mistress of the farm. «Ah! So you have come to despise the goods God gives us? May the saints take pity on us! Since this is the way of it, you piece of effrontery, I forbid you ever to speak to Dénès; and if he appears at the farm again, I will go to the rector, and have him put you in his Sunday admonition.»

«Oh! You would not do that, aunt!» cried Téphany, terrified.

«As surely as there is a Paradise, I will do it!» answered the old woman angrily; «but in the mean time, do you go to the washing-place, wash the linen, and dry it on the hawthorn bushes: for since you have had an ear for the wind from Plover, nothing is done, and your two arms are not worth the five fingers of a one-armed cripple.»

Téphany tried in vain to reply. Mother Bourhis pointed imperiously to the bucket, the soap, and the washing-beetle, ordering her to go at once.

The young girl obeyed; but her heart swelled with grief and resentment.

"Old age is harder than the stones of the farm-house sill," she thought,—"yes, a hundred times harder; for by continual dropping, rain wears out the stone, but tears cannot soften the will of old people. God knows that chatting with Dénès was the only pleasure I had. If I cannot see him any more, I might as well enter a convent! And yet the good angel was always with us. Dénès taught me only beautiful songs; talked to me only about what we would do when we were husband and wife together on a farm,—he cultivating the land and I taking care of the stables. Is it forbidden then honestly to give ourselves to each other in hope and courage? God would not have made marriage if it was a sin to think of marrying some day; and he would not have given us judgment if he forbade us to choose. Ah! it is doing me a great wrong to keep me from knowing Dénès better, for he is the only one who holds my heart."

While thus talking to herself, Téphany had reached the washing-place. As she went to set down her bucket of linen on one of the white stones, she saw an old woman who was not of the parish, and who was leaning her head against a little blackthorn staff yellowed by fire. In spite of her trouble, Téphany saluted her.

"My aunt [a Breton title of respect] is enjoying the fresh air under the alders?" she said, placing her load farther off.

"Who has only the roof of the sky for house, rests where he may," answered the old woman in a trembling voice.

"Are you so deserted?" asked Téphany compassionately; "and have you no relative left who can make you a place at his fireside?"

"All have long been dead," answered the unknown; "and I have no other family than kind hearts."

The young girl took the bread, spread with lard, which Barbaïk had wrapped in a bit of linen and placed near her beetle.

"Here, poor aunt," she said, offering it to the beggar. "To-day at least you shall dine like a Christian, with the bread of the good God: only remember my dead parents in your prayers."

The old woman took the bread, then looked at Téphany.

"Those who aid, deserve to be aided," she said. "Your eyes are still red because Barbaïk, the miser, has forbidden you to talk to the young man from Plover; but he is an honest-hearted fellow, who only wishes what is right, and I will give you a means of seeing him every day."

"You!" exclaimed the young girl, stupefied at finding the beggarwoman so well informed.

"Take this long brass pin," answered the old woman; "and every time you put it on, Mother Bourhis will have to go out and count her cabbages. As long as you wear the pin, you will be free; and your aunt will not return until the pin is back in its case."

With these words the beggar rose, made a sign of farewell, and disappeared.

Téphany remained astonished. Evidently the old woman was not a beggar, but a saint or a singer of truth [*i. e.*, a fairy fortune-teller].

At all events, the young girl clutched the pin fast, quite determined to test its power on the morrow.

Therefore, toward the hour when Dénès usually came, she placed it at her collar. Barbaïk immediately took her sandals and went into the door-yard, where she began to count her cabbages. Then from the door-yard she went to the orchard, and from the orchard to the other fields; so that the young girl could chat as long as she liked with the young man from Plover.

It was the same the next day, and all the following days for several weeks. As soon as the pin was taken from its case, the good woman ran to her cabbages; always beginning over again to calculate how many there were of big ones, of little ones, of smooth ones and frizzled ones.

At first Dénès seemed charmed with this liberty; but little by little he became less eager. He had taught Téphany all his songs. He had told her all his plans. Now he was obliged to seek something to tell her, and to get it ready beforehand as a minister does his sermon. Sometimes, even, giving his carting and wheeling as excuse, he did not come at all; and Téphany had her trouble for nothing. She saw that her lover's affection had cooled, and became more sad than before.

One day when she had waited in vain for the young man, she took her pitcher and went to the fountain, her heart heavy with grief.

As she reached it, she saw the same old woman who had given her the magic pin. She was standing near the spring; and seeing Téphany, she began with a little laugh like a grasshopper's note:—

"Ah! Ah! The pretty girl is happier, isn't she, now that she can converse with her lover at any hour of the day?"

"Alas! for that I must be with him," answered Téphany sadly, "and familiarity has rendered my company less pleasing to him. Ah! aunt, since you gave me the means of seeing him every day, you should have given me at the same time enough wit to keep him."

"Is that what my daughter would like?" asked the old woman. "Then here is a feather plucked from the wing of a wise angel. When she places it in her hair, nothing can stop her; for she will have as much wit and cunning as Master Jean himself" [mischievous elf].

Téphany, red with joy, seized the feather; and the next day, before Dénès's visit, she stuck it in her blue hair-band. At the same instant it seemed to her that the sun was rising in her mind. She knew all that the *kloeirs* take ten years to learn, and many things that the wisest do not know at all; for with the learning of men, she had too the cunning of women. So Dénès was astonished at all she said to him. She spoke in verse like the *bazvalanes* [matchmakers], knew more songs than the beggars of Scaër, and repeated the local stories told at all the lime-kilns and mills of the country.

The young man returned the next day, and the following days; and Téphany always found something new to tell him. Dénès had never seen a man or a woman with so much wit; but after enjoying it, he grew frightened. Téphany had not been able to keep from wearing her feather for others than him. Her songs and malicious speeches were repeated everywhere, and every one said:—

"She has a bad heart. Whoever marries her will be led by the bridle."

The young man from Plover repeated this prediction to himself; and as he had always thought he would rather hold the bridle than wear it, he began to find it more difficult to laugh at Téphany's pleasantries.

One day when he was going to a dance in a new barn, the young girl exercised all her wit to keep him away; but Dénès, who did not wish to be influenced, would not listen to her, and repulsed her prayers.

"Ah! I see very well why you are so anxious about the new barn," said Téphany, vexed. "You will meet Azilicz of Penenru there!"

Azilicz was the prettiest girl in the canton; and according to all her good friends, the most coquettish. Penenru was near

Plover; so the pretty girl and Dénès had become acquainted from living in the same neighborhood.

« Yes, Azilicz will be there, » said Dénès, who liked to make his sweetheart jealous; « and to see her is worth going a long way. »

« Go then where your heart leads you, » said the young girl, wounded.

And she went back to the house, refusing to hear anything more.

But she sat down on the hearth, overcome with sadness; and after thinking a long time, she exclaimed as she threw down the wonderful feather which had been given her:—

« What good does wit do young girls, since the men are drawn by beauty as flies by the sun? Ah! what I needed, old aunt, was not to be the most learned, but the most beautiful. »

« Be then also the most beautiful, » answered a voice suddenly.

Téphany turned, astonished, and saw near the door the old woman with the thorn staff, who said to her:—

« Take this necklace; and as long as you wear it around your neck, you will seem among other women like the queen of the fields among other wild flowers. »

Téphany could not repress a cry of joy. She hastened to put on the necklace, ran to her little mirror, and stood there delighted. Never was girl so pink and so white,—so charming to look at.

Wishing to judge at once of the effect she produced upon Dénès, she dressed in her best; put on her woolen stockings and her buckled shoes, and took the road toward the new barn.

But behold, when she reached the cross-road, she met a young lord, who at sight of her made his coachman stop.

« By my life! » he cried with admiration, « I did not know there was such a beautiful creature in the country; and if it were to cost me my soul, she must bear my name. »

But Téphany answered him:—

« Go on, sir. Go on your way. I am only a poor peasant used to winnowing, and milking, and mowing. »

« And I will make you a great lady! » answered the lord, taking her hand and trying to lead her to his carriage.

The young girl hung back.

« I do not wish to marry any one but Dénès, the laborer from Plover, » she said resolutely.

He wished to insist; but when he saw her approaching the ditch in order to escape into the wheat-field, he ordered his servants to seize her and put her by force in the carriage, which started again on a gallop.

At the end of an hour they reached the castle, which was built of cut stones and covered with slate, as the houses of the nobility are. The young lord sent out for a priest to marry them; and since, while they were waiting, Téphany refused to listen to him and tried to escape, he had her shut up in a great room closed by three bolted doors, and ordered his servants to guard her. But with her pin Téphany sent them all to the garden to count cabbages; with her feather she discovered a fourth door hidden in the wood-work; and she escaped. Then, fervently recommending herself to God, she fled through the underbrush like a hare which has heard the hounds.

She went as long as she could, until night began to fall. Then she saw the belfry of a convent, and knocked at the little grated door to ask for shelter; but on seeing her the porter shook her head.

« Go on, go on,» she said: « there is no place here for such pretty girls running on the roads alone at this hour.»

And closing the gate, she went away without listening to anything more.

Forced to go on, Téphany stopped at the door of a farmhouse where several women were chatting with some young fellows, and made the same request as at the convent.

The mistress of the house hesitated to answer; but all the young men, amazed at Téphany's beauty, exclaimed at once, offering to take her to their fathers' houses, and each one trying to promise her more than the others. From promises they came to quarrels, and from quarrels to blows; so that the frightened women began to scold Téphany, telling her it was a great shame to come and trouble the men with her beauty. The poor girl, beside herself, tried to escape; but the young men pursued her. Then she remembered her necklace; and tearing it from her neck, she threw it around that of a sow which was browsing in the spearwort. At the same instant the charm vanished from her, and all the young men began to chase the frightened beast.

Téphany went on in spite of fatigue; and finally reached her aunt's farm, very weary, and still more sad. Her wishes had succeeded so ill thus far that it was several days before she made another. However, Dénès came more and more irregularly. He had undertaken to cultivate a warren, and worked there from morning to night. When the young girl expressed regret at not seeing him, he always answered that his work was their only resource, and that one must have dowries and inheritances to spend time chatting.

Then Téphany began to complain and to wish.

"God pardon me!" she said to herself; "but what I should have asked was not liberty to see Dénès every day, for he is tired of it; nor wit, for he is afraid of it; nor beauty, for it causes trouble and distrust: but instead, money, with which one is master of oneself and others. Ah! if I dared make one more request of the old aunt, I should be wiser."

"Be satisfied," said the voice of the old beggar, whom Téphany could not see. "If you look in your right pocket you will find a little box. Rub your eyes with the ointment it contains, and you will have in yourself a treasure."

The young girl quickly sought in her pocket, found the box, opened it, and was rubbing her eyes as directed when Barbaïk Bourhis entered.

She, who for some time had been losing whole days in spite of herself at counting cabbages, seeing all the farm work behindhand, only wanted an occasion to vent her ill-temper on some one. Finding her niece seated and idle, she clasped her hands.

"So that is the way you work when I am out!" she exclaimed. "Ah! I am no longer surprised to find ruin in the house! Aren't you ashamed thus to steal the bread of a relative?"

Téphany wanted to excuse herself, but Barbaïk's anger was like milk heated over a brush fire: as soon as it boils, it bubbles up and goes over. From reproaches she passed to threats, and from threats to a blow. Téphany, who had borne the rest patiently enough, could not help weeping; but judge her surprise when she saw that each of her tears was a beautiful pearl, round and shining.

Mother Bourhis, who also perceived this, cried out with admiration and began to gather them.

Dénès, who entered at this moment, was not less amazed.

"Pearls! genuine pearls!" he cried, taking them.

"It's a fortune!" said Barbaïk, who went on gathering them. "Ah! what fairy has bestowed this gift?"

« No one must know about it, Dénès; I will share with you, but with no one else. Keep on, my girl, keep on. You will profit too.»

She held her apron, and Dénès his hat. He thought only of the pearls, and forgot they were tears.

Téphany, choking, tried to escape; but her aunt stopped her, reproaching her with wanting to wrong them, and repeating whatever would make her weep more. The young girl sought to control herself, and wiped her eyes.

« It's over already!» cried Barbaïk. «Ah! Blessed Mary! If I had such a gift, I would not want to stop any more than the big spring on the green road. Can't we beat her a little to see?»

« No,» interrupted Dénès: « we must not tire her too much at first. I will go at once to town and find out how much each pearl is worth.»

Barbaïk and he went out together, guessing the value in advance, and settling the division, in which Téphany was forgotten.

She pressed her clasped hands against her heart with a sigh, and raised her eyes to heaven; but they fell upon the old beggar, who, leaning upon her staff in the darkest corner of the hearth, was looking at her with a mocking air. The young girl trembled; and seizing the pin, the feather, and the box of ointment—

« Take them back, take them all back,» she cried wildly. « Misfortune to those who are not content with what God gave! He had endowed me according to his wisdom, which I foolishly questioned! Carry liberty, wit, beauty, and riches to others. I am not, and I do not want to be, anything but the simple girl I was, loving and serving as well as I could.»

« Very well, Téphany,» answered the old woman. « The trial is over: let it profit you. The Trinity sent me to give you this lesson. I am your guardian angel: now that you understand the truth you will live tranquilly, for God has promised peace to well-intentioned hearts.»

With these words the beggar changed into an angel gleaming with light, dispersing the perfume of incense and violets through the house, then vanishing like a flash.

Téphany forgave Dénès for wanting to sell her tears. Become less exacting, she accepted such happiness as one may have upon earth; and she married the young man from Plover, who was always a good husband and a courageous worker.

HERBERT SPENCER.

HERBERT SPENCER

(1820–)

BY F. HOWARD COLLINS

The author of ‘A System of Synthetic Philosophy,’ ‘Education,’ ‘Essays: Scientific, Political and Speculative,’ ‘The Study of Sociology,’ and many other articles in periodicals and newspapers, was born at Derby on the 27th of April, 1820. His father, William George Spencer, was a schoolmaster in the town, and published a work entitled ‘Inventional Geometry’: «a series of questions, problems, and explanations, intended to familiarize the pupil with geometrical conceptions, to exercise his inventive faculty, and to prepare him for Euclid and the higher mathematics.» Though this work received but little notice when first issued, it is now, after many years, coming into use among those teachers who desire to give a more rational course of study to their younger scholars prior to commencing Euclid; to which this little work forms a most excellent introduction, as may be gathered from Mr. Herbert Spencer's own words:—

«To its great efficiency, both as a means of providing interest in geometry, and as a mental discipline, I can give personal testimony. I have seen it create in a class of boys so much enthusiasm that they looked forward to their geometry lesson as a chief event in the week. And girls, initiated in the system by my father, have frequently begged of him for problems to solve during the holidays.»

Another work of his, ‘Lucid Shorthand,’ was completed in MS. in 1843, but has only recently been published by his son, who also contributes a preface.

Herbert Spencer's surroundings were in fact early differentiated from «the daily round — the common task» of most boys. The conversation which came to his ears was more permeated with the rational interpretation of surrounding phenomena — why and how did such-and-such a thing happen — than is usual now; and still more so at the time of which we write. Herbert Spencer's innate love of natural science, and his marvelous faculty of observation, so wonderfully displayed in all his writings, were without doubt largely nourished and increased by his father's love for nature, and especially entomology; a science to which the son devoted much of his leisure,—

collecting, describing, and drawing most of the insects about his home. Soon after the age of thirteen, he spent some time under the roof of his uncle, the Rev. Thomas Spencer, chairman of the Bath Union, and author of many pamphlets dealing principally with the methods for ameliorating the condition of the poorer people in his and other parishes. The mathematical training which he received here enabled him on his return home to become assistant teacher in his father's school; but finding the occupation uncongenial, and the railway mania being then at its height, Spencer at the age of seventeen joined the profession of railway engineering, and during the next eight years surveyed different parts of the country for the construction of lines. One of these — the Birmingham to Gloucester — may be mentioned, as it is interesting from containing one of the steepest inclines in England. During this period he contributed papers on technical subjects to the engineering journals; and described new methods and instruments shortening in a great degree many of the laborious calculations entailed by railway-surveying, locomotive-engine testing, bridge-making, and so forth. The original drawings made by Mr. Spencer to explain and accompany these inventions, are very remarkable from their extreme neatness and accuracy. They appear indeed, to those who have had the opportunity of seeing them, to be the result of engraving on copper.

At the age of twenty-two, the opening to the path of his future life may be dimly discerned in some letters which he wrote to the Nonconformist (newspaper) on 'The Proper Sphere of Government,' and which were subsequently published as a pamphlet. From this time the literary bent of his nature developed and came into greater prominence; for, giving up railway engineering, he went to London, and from writing articles and leaders in the Economist,— the most important weekly newspaper in England dealing with finance and the matters included under the old term "political economy," — became in 1848 its sub-editor, which office he held for five years. This appointment may be looked upon as one of much value to the future philosopher: it gave a certain amount of leisure, while the occupation it entailed drew his mind more and more to those problems of Sociology with which his reputation will ever be associated, while at the same time it kept him in touch with some of the best intellects of the time, and many lifelong friendships were then formed.

It may be of interest here to mention how some of Mr. Spencer's real leisure has been passed. A severe winter at Birmingham, when surveying for the railway, led him to practice skating, and this to designing a peculiar form of skate bringing the foot nearer to the ice than usual, and enabling the "outside edge" to be swung with much greater facility, even by those having weak ankles. Fishing was always a favorite amusement; and as he says now in conversation, some of his happiest times were spent in later years fly-fishing for salmon on the west coast of Scotland, when in fact staying with some very old friends in Argyllshire. Of the pastimes usually associated with indoors, two may be mentioned,—billiards and music: the latter, up to the present day, giving him exceeding pleasure when well performed and of that school to which he is partial,—Beethoven, or a simple ballad sung with real feeling, but never a mere display of what has been aptly called «musical gymnastics»; mere difficulties of execution, however well surmounted, never appealing to him.

Two years after he obtained the appointment on the Economist appeared his first volume, and one of importance, 'Social Statics: or the Conditions Essential to Human Happiness Specified, and the First of them Developed.' This was out of print for many years, some of its views not being in accord with the more mature ones of the author; hence in 1892 he published an «abridged and revised» edition, together with 'The Man versus the State,'—a series of essays to which allusion will be made as the time of their publication comes to be dwelt with. The original edition of 'Social Statics' is noteworthy as being the only work which Mr. Spencer wrote with his own hand, all subsequent ones being dictated to a shorthand amanuensis.

The seed which has germinated into the pronounced individualism of Herbert Spencer may be discerned here in its embryonic state:—

«Liberty of action being the first essential to exercise of faculties, and therefore the first essential to happiness; and the liberty of each, limited by the like liberties of all, being the form which this first essential assumes when applied to many instead of one,—it follows that this liberty of each, limited by the like liberties of all, is the rule in conformity with which society must be organized. Freedom being the prerequisite to normal life in the individual, equal freedom becomes the prerequisite to normal life in society. And if this law of equal freedom is the *primary* law of right relationship between man and man, then no desire to get fulfilled a *secondary* law can warrant us in breaking it.»

Considering the state of knowledge in 1852, when special creation, as contrasted with evolution, was the firm and almost universal belief, we are fully justified in alluding to a short essay which Mr. Spencer wrote in this year as singularly noteworthy; for the «development hypothesis,» as the theory of evolution was then called, is contrasted with special creation, and the latter shown to be logically indefensible:—«Which, then, is the most rational hypothesis? that of special creations, which has neither a fact to support it nor is even definitely conceivable; or that of modification, which is not only definitely conceivable, but is countenanced by the habitudes of every existing organism?»

Two years later a long essay on 'Manners and Fashion' was published in the Westminster Review, showing how society develops on its political, religious, and ceremonial sides; how the old forms which society successively throws off have all been once vitally united with it,—have severally served as protective envelopes within which a higher humanity was being evolved. «They are cast aside only when they become hindrances—only when some inner and better envelope has been formed; and they bequeath to us all that was in them of good. The periodical abolitions of tyrannical laws have left the administration of justice not only uninjured but purified. Dead and buried creeds have not carried with them the essential morality they contained, which still exists, uncontaminated by the sloughs of superstition. And all that there is of justice, kindness, and beauty, embodied in our cumbrous forms of etiquette, will live perennially when the forms themselves have been forgotten.»

The British Quarterly Review of the same year contained a long and valuable article on 'The Genesis of Science,' from which the conclusion is reached: «Not only that the sciences have a common root, but that science in general has a common root with language, classification, reasoning, art; that through civilization these have advanced together, acting and reacting upon each other just as the separate sciences have done; and that thus the development of intelligence in all its divisions and subdivisions has conformed to this same law which we have shown that the sciences conform to.»

The year 1855 showed that the doctrine of evolution had taken definite and systematic form in the author's mind, for the first edition of the 'Principles of Psychology' was published. As this subsequently forms a part of the 'Synthetic Philosophy,' its consideration may well be delayed until we come to deal with that as a whole. Similarly the essay published in 1857, 'Progress: Its Law and Cause,' as the ideas and illustrations in it are incorporated in 'First Principles.'

The year 1860 will be remarkable for all time as the date when Mr. Spencer issued his prospectus of 'A System of Philosophy,' announcing that he «proposes to issue in periodical parts a connected series of works which he has for several years been preparing,» and giving a detailed outline of them. He announced in all ten volumes; and during the thirty-six years that have since elapsed, he has accomplished, in spite of such ill health as would have deterred most men from writing at all, the magnificent total of ten complete volumes,—out of the eleven to which the system has expanded in development,— in addition to innumerable essays and letters on subjects of interest in the domain of politics and economics in their widest sense — to sociology, in fact.

In the interim between the issue of this prospectus and the first volume of the series, Mr. Spencer republished, with additions, four essays in a small volume, entitled ‘Education: Intellectual, Moral, and Physical’; which has since become the most popular of his works, and has been translated into French, German, Italian, Russian, Hungarian, Dutch, Danish, Spanish, Swedish, Greek, Bohemian, Japanese, Chinese, and some others, too numerous to mention. It is of such immense value to all those who desire to bring up children on rational principles, that it merits an instructive quotation from each of the chapters. The question asked in the first chapter, What knowledge is of most worth? is answered in these words:—

«Paraphrasing an Eastern fable, we may say that in the family of knowledges, Science is the household drudge, who in obscurity hides unrecognized perfections. To her has been committed all the work; by her skill, intelligence, and devotion, have all conveniences and gratifications been obtained: and while ceaselessly ministering to the rest, she has been kept in the background, that her haughty sisters may flaunt their fripperies in the eyes of the world. The parallel holds yet further. For we are fast coming to the *dénouement*, when the positions will be changed, and while these haughty sisters sink into merited neglect, Science, proclaimed as highest alike in worth and beauty, will reign supreme.»

Of intellectual education:—

«While men dislike the things and places that suggest painful recollections, and delight in those which call to mind bygone pleasures, painful lessons will make knowledge repulsive, and pleasurable lessons will make it attractive. The man to whom in boyhood, information came in dreary tasks along with threats of punishment, and who was never led into habits of independent inquiry, is unlikely to be a student in after years; while those to whom it came in natural forms, at the proper times, and who remember its facts as not only interesting in themselves, but as a long series of gratifying successes, are likely to continue through life that self-instruction commenced in youth.»

In moral education:—

«Remember that the aim of your discipline should be to produce a *self-governing* being; not to produce a being *governed by others*. Were your children fated to pass their lives as slaves, you could not too much accustom them to slavery during their childhood; but as they are by-and-by to be free men, with no one to control their daily conduct, you cannot too much accustom them to self-control while they are still under your eye.»

In physical education:—

«Perhaps nothing will so much hasten the time when body and mind will both be adequately cared for, as a diffusion of the belief that the preservation of health is a *duty*. Few seem conscious that there is such a thing as physical morality: men's habitual words and acts imply the idea that they are at liberty to treat their bodies as they please. Disorders entailed by disobedience to nature's dictates they regard simply as grievances, not as the effects of a conduct more or less flagitious. Though the evil consequences inflicted on their dependents, and on future generations, are often as great as those caused by crime, yet they do not think themselves in any degree criminal. . . . The fact is, that all breaches of the laws of health are *physical sins*. When this is generally seen, then, and perhaps not till then, will the physical training of the young receive the attention it deserves.»

On June 5th, 1862, was issued the first installment of the Philosophy: the first part of 'First Principles' dealing with 'The Unknowable,' and showing that the only possible reconciliation of Science and Religion lies in the belief of an Absolute, transcending not only human knowledge but human conception, indeed:—

«The consciousness of an inscrutable Power manifested to us through all phenomena has been growing ever clearer; and must eventually be freed from its imperfections. The certainty that on the one hand such a Power exists, while on the other hand its nature transcends intuition and is beyond imagination, is the certainty towards which intelligence has from the first been progressing. To this conclusion Science inevitably arrives as it reaches its confines; while to this conclusion Religion is irresistibly driven by criticism. And satisfying as it does the most rigorous logic, at the same time that it gives the religious sentiment the widest possible sphere of action, it is the conclusion we are bound to accept without reserve or qualification.»

The second part, entitled 'The Knowable,' deals with the body of knowledge constituting what is usually termed Philosophy or Metaphysics; treats of Space, Time, Matter, Motion, and Force, considered in themselves and in their relation to each other; and expounds those highest generalizations now being disclosed by Science, which are severally true not of one class of phenomena, but of *all* classes of phenomena, and which are thus the keys to all classes of phenomena. From the study of these components of all phenomena the author passes to the law of their composition, «the law of the continuous redistribution of matter and motion.» This, having to cover all phenomena,—whether of inorganic nature, of life, of mind, of society, or of morals,—is necessarily defined in very abstract terms:— «Evolution is an integration of matter and concomitant dissipation of motion; during which the matter passes from an indefinite, incoherent homogeneity, to a definite, coherent heterogeneity; and during which the retained motion undergoes a parallel transformation.»

This extremely generalized conception, forming as it does the centre around which the whole of this philosophy revolves, will, to the ordinary reader, prove difficult of comprehension without reading the volume from which it is taken, when a more clear understanding of its implications will arise. The remaining chapters then show that the redistribution of matter and motion must everywhere take place in those ways, and produce those traits, which celestial bodies, organisms, minds, and societies alike display:—

«Thus we are led to the conclusion that the entire process of things as displayed in the aggregate of the visible Universe, is analogous to the entire process of things as displayed in the smallest aggregates.

«Motion as well as matter being fixed in quantity, it would seem that, the change in the distribution of matter which motion effects coming to a limit in whichever direction it is carried, the indestructible motion thereupon necessitates a reverse distribution. Apparently, the universally coexistent forces of attraction and repulsion—which, as we have seen, necessitate rhythm in the totality of its changes—produce now an immeasurable period during which the attractive forces predominating cause universal concentration, and then an immeasurable period during which the repulsive forces predominating cause universal diffusion; alternate eras of Evolution and Dissolution. And thus there is suggested the conception of a past during which there have been successive Evolutions analogous to that which is going on; and a future during which successive other such Evolutions may go on—ever the same in principle but never the same in concrete result.»

None of Mr. Spencer's works exhibit more clearly the philosophic grasp of the author in dealing with such stupendous problems, or his knowledge of the principles of such a science as astronomy; in fact, from none can a better idea be formed of his truly encyclopædic knowledge. On every page are many and apt illustrations taken from some one of each of the sciences, and showing how thorough is the mastery of the principles of each one.

After this work Mr. Spencer writes:—«In logical order should here come the application of these First Principles to Inorganic Nature. But this great division it is proposed to pass over: partly because, even without it, the scheme is too extensive; and partly because the interpretation of Organic Nature after the proposed method is of more immediate importance. The second work of the series will therefore be ‹The Principles of Biology.›»—This, although first published in 1864, is still a classic, and without rival for giving the broad generalizations which hold true of all living beings; whether they be of that simple unorganized form which the Amœba displays, the organized representatives of the vegetable kingdom with its ferns, palms, and stately forest trees, or such animals as the earthworm, the butterfly, the lion, or man. Charles Darwin's ‹Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life,› dealing with organic evolution alone, was published a few years previously—but *after*, of course, the enunciation of the general principle of Evolution by Mr. Spencer; and the results are incorporated in these two large volumes, and form a strong buttress to the truth of the philosophy. How exceedingly near Mr. Spencer was to discovering the principle of Natural Selection—or as he has since named it, ‹Survival of the Fittest›—may be seen by readers of the first edition of ‹Social Statics›; for it contains a paragraph from which a skillful dialectician could easily prove that this was really in the author's mind when it was written! That such was the case, however, Mr. Spencer has denied. After expounding the laws holding good of all living beings, the volume goes on to speak hopefully of human population in the future. «Pressure of population and its accompanying evils will disappear; and it will leave a state of things requiring from each individual no more than a normal and pleasurable activity. Cessation in the decrease of fertility implies cessation in the development of the nervous system; and this implies a nervous system that has become equal to all that is demanded of it—has not to do more than is natural to it. But that exercise of faculties which does not exceed what is natural constitutes gratification. In the end, therefore, the obtainment of subsistence, and discharge of all the parental and social duties, will require just that kind and that amount of action needful to health and happiness.»

In 1868 commenced the issue in parts of the ‹Principles of Psychology,› a very much amplified edition of the work first published in 1855, and so revised as to form a consistent and systematic part of the philosophy,—the lapse of time between the two editions enabling the hypothesis to take a much higher development. In this learned treatise we see all the phenomena of mind—the emotions, the feelings, and the will—evolved from the simplest constituents, and problems of the most abstract kind, and of exceeding difficulty in logic and metaphysics, dealt with from the evolution standpoint and fully developed; it concludes with a brief outline of the special psychology of man considered as the unit of which societies are composed. With these volumes «a final remark worth making is, that the æsthetic activities in general may be expected to play an increasing part in human life as evolution advances. Greater economization of energy, resulting from superiority of organization, will have in the future, effects like those it has had in the past. The order of activities to which the æsthetic belong, having been already initiated by this economization, will hereafter be extended by it: the economization being achieved both directly through the improvement of the human structure itself, and indirectly through the improvement of all appliances, mechanical, social, and other. A growing surplus of energy will bring a growing proportion of the æsthetic activities and gratifications; and while the forms of art will be such as yield pleasurable exercise to the simpler faculties, they will in a greater degree than now appeal to the higher emotions.»

In June 1874, the first part of the ‹Principles of Sociology› was published; and the whole of Vol. i., the largest of the series, completed by 1876. The first division, the ‹Data of Sociology,› is entirely taken up with a description of the interpretation likely to be given by the primitive man — the savage, or the uncivilized — of the various phenomena which occur at every moment around him: —

«Changes in the sky and on the earth, occurring hourly, daily, and at shorter or longer intervals, go on in ways about which the savage knows nothing,— unexpected appearances and disappearances, transmutations, metamorphoses. While seeming to show that arbitrariness characterizes all actions, these foster the notion of a duality in the things which become visible and vanish, or which transform themselves; and this notion is confirmed by experiences of shadows, reflections, and echoes.

«The impressions thus produced by converse with external nature favor a belief set up by a more definite experience — the experience of dreams. Having no conception of mind, the primitive man regards a dream as a series of actual occurrences; he did the things, went to the places, saw the persons dreamt of. Untroubled by incongruities, he accepts the facts as they stand; and in proportion as he thinks about them, is led to conceive a double which goes away during sleep and comes back. This conception of his own duality seems confirmed by the somnambulism occasionally witnessed.

«More decisively does it seem confirmed by other abnormal insensibilities. In swoon, apoplexy, catalepsy, and the unconsciousness following violence, it appears that the other-self, instead of returning at all, will not return for periods varying from some minutes to some days. Occasionally after one of these states, the other-self tells what has happened in the interval; occasionally prolonged absence raises the doubt whether it is not gone away for an indefinite period.

«The distinction between these conditions of temporary insensibility and the condition of permanent insensibility is one which, sometimes imperceptible to instructed persons, cannot be perceived by the savage. The normal unconsciousness of sleep from which a man's double is readily brought back, is linked by these abnormal kinds of unconsciousness from which the double is brought back with difficulty, to that lasting kind of unconsciousness from which the double cannot be brought back at all. Still analogy leads the savage to infer that it will eventually come back. . . . Such resurrection, shown by the universal fear of the dead to be vaguely imagined even by the lowest races, becomes clearly imagined as the idea of a wandering duplicate is made definite by the dream theory.

« The second-self ascribed to each man, at first differs in nothing from its original. It is figured as equally visible, equally material; and no less suffers hunger, thirst, fatigue, pain. Indistinguishable from the person himself,—capable of being slain, devoured, or otherwise destroyed a second time,—the original ghost, soul, spirit, differentiates slowly in supposed nature. Having at the outset but a temporary second life, it gradually acquires a permanent one; while it deviates more and more in substance from body, becoming at length etherealized.

« This double of the dead man, originally conceived as like him in all other respects, is conceived as having like occupations; and from this belief in a second life thus like the first, and also like in the social arrangements it is subject to, there result the practices of leaving with the corpse food, drink, clothes, weapons, and of sacrificing at the grave domestic animals, wives, slaves. . . . The place in which this life after death is believed to be passed, varies with the antecedents of the races. . . . Hence at the grave are left fit appliances for the journey: canoes for the voyage, or horses to ride, dogs to guide, weapons for defense, money and passports for security. And where burial on a mountain range entails belief in this as a residence of ancestral ghosts, or where such a range has been held by a conquering race, the heavens, supposed to be accessible from the mountain-tops, come to be regarded as the other-world, or rather as one of the other-worlds.

« The doubles of dead men, at first assumed to have but temporary second lives, do not, in that case, tend to form in popular belief an accumulating host; but they necessarily tend to form such a host when permanent second lives are ascribed to them. Swarming everywhere, capable of appearing and disappearing at will, and working in ways that cannot be foreseen,—they are thought of as the causes of all things which are strange, unexpected, inexplicable.

« But while primitive men, regarding themselves as at the mercy of surrounding ghosts, try to defend themselves by the aid of the exorcist and the sorcerer, who deal with ghosts antagonistically, there is simultaneously adopted a contrary behavior towards ghosts,—a propitiation of them. . . . Out of this motive and its observances come all forms of worship. Awe of the ghost makes sacred the sheltering structure of the tomb; and this grows into the temple, while the tomb itself becomes the altar. From provisions placed for the dead, now habitually and now at fixed intervals, arise religious oblations, ordinary and extraordinary,— daily and at festivals. Immolations and mutilations at the grave pass into sacrifices and offerings of blood at the altar of a deity. Abstinence from food for the benefit of the ghost develops into fasting as a pious practice; and journeys to the grave with gifts become pilgrimages to the shrine. Praises of the dead and prayers to them grow into religious praises and prayers. And so every holy rite is derived from a funeral rite. . . . Besides those aberrant developments of ancestor-worship which result from identification of ancestors with idols, animals, plants, and natural powers, there are direct developments of it. Out of the assemblage of ghosts, some evolve into deities who retain their anthropomorphic characters. As the divine and the superior are, in the primitive mind, equivalent ideas; as the living man and reappearing ghost are at first confounded in early beliefs; as ghost and god are convertible terms,— we may understand how a deity develops out of a powerful man, and out of the ghost of a powerful man, by small steps. Within the tribe, the chief, the magician, or some one otherwise skilled, held in awe during his life as showing powers of unknown origin and extent, is feared in a higher degree when, after death, he gains the further powers possessed by all ghosts; and still more the stranger bringing new arts, as well as the conqueror of superior race, is treated as a superhuman being during life and afterwards worshiped as a yet greater superhuman being. Remembering that the most marvelous version of any story commonly obtains the greatest currency, and that so, from generation to generation, the deeds of such traditional persons grow by unchecked exaggerations eagerly listened to, we may see that in time any amount of expansion and idealization can be reached."

The foregoing long excerpt will serve two important purposes: for it shows not only the admirable power of the author to sum up in a short space the long arguments and illustrations of many chapters,— of, in the present instance, more than four hundred pages,—but also it furnishes a brief *résumé* of one of his original theories, showing how his writings are permeated through and through by the principle of evolution; how one fact naturally leads to the next, and this fact to another, and so on until at last we stand in awe before the stupendous generalization to which these steps have led us. Stupendous is the grasp of intellect involved; stupendous in that, compelled to acknowledge the truth of each of the steps, we are forced to accept the veracity of the larger truth to which we have ascended.

Part ii. is entitled 'The Inductions of Sociology,' and deals with all the varied forms which societies have, and their growths, structures, and functions, the sustaining, distributing, and regulating systems, the relations of these structures to the surrounding conditions, the dominant forms of social activities entailed, and the metamorphoses of types caused by changes in the activities. It is here that we come across the great division, or dichotomization, of all societies into the militant and the industrial; into those which are framed on the principle of compulsory co-operation, and those which are framed on the principle of voluntary co-operation. These «two types, when evolved to their extreme forms, are diametrically opposed; and the contrasts between their traits are amongst the most important with which Sociology has to deal.» In fact, without a thorough grasp of this, a great deal of the author's work upon Society would be difficult to comprehend,—it underlies so much, and is so frequently coming to the surface. It must not be imagined that these are the highest types of society; for «some pages might be added respecting a possible future social type, differing as much from the industrial as this does from the militant,—a type which, having a sustaining system more fully developed than any we know at present, will use the products of industry, neither for maintaining a militant organization, nor exclusively for material aggrandizement, but will devote them to carrying on the higher activities. As the contrast between the militant and the industrial types is indicated by inversion of the belief that individuals exist for the benefit of the State, into the belief that the State exists for the benefit of individuals, so the contrast between the industrial type and the type likely to be evolved from it is indicated by inversion of the belief that life is for work, into the belief that work is for life.» The multiplication of institutions and appliances for intellectual and æsthetic culture, and for kindred purposes, not of a directly life-sustaining kind, but having gratification for their immediate purpose, tends to support this prospect.

The many facts contemplated in these «Inductions» unite in proving that social evolution forms a part of evolution at large, and fulfills in all respects the general formula: there is integration both by simple increase of mass, and by coalescence and re-coalescence of masses; there is a change from homogeneity to heterogeneity,—from the simple tribe alike in all its parts, to the civilized nation full of unlikenesses; there is greater coherence,—for while the wandering tribe is held together by no bonds, a civilized nation will hold together for hundreds of years, nay, thousands; there is greater definiteness,—arrangements become settled and slowly more precise, customs pass into laws which become more fixed and specific, and all institutions, at first confusedly intermingled, slowly separate at the same time that each within itself marks off more distinctly its component parts.

Part iii., ‘Domestic Institutions,’ deals with the general phenomena of race maintenance, and the diverse interests of the species, of the parents, and of the offspring; the primitive relations of the sexes from the early period of promiscuity to the latest form, that of monogamy; and the status of women and of children. In all of which the law of evolution in general is shown to hold good, and that the higher traits in the relations of the sexes to one another and to children, which have accompanied social evolution, have been made possible by those higher traits of intelligence and feeling produced by the experiences and disciplines of progressing social states.

One of the most prominent changes in the future may be the greater care of parents by offspring. «At present the latter days of the old whose married children live away from them, are made dreary by the lack of those pleasures yielded by the constant society of descendants; but a time may be expected when this evil will be met by an attachment of adults to their aged parents, which, if not as strong as that of parents to children, approaches it in strength. . . . When the earlier stages of education passed through in the domestic circle have come to yield, as they will in ways scarcely dreamt of at present, daily occasions for the strengthening of sympathy, intellectual and moral, then will the latter days of life be smoothed by a greater filial care, reciprocating the greater parental care bestowed in earlier life.»

Part iv., ‘Ceremonial Institutions,’ shows how the formula of evolution is conformed to by the history of Trophies, Mutilations, Presents, Visits, Obeisances, Titles, Badges, Costumes, and all the varied forms of class distinction. It is shown that «rules of behavior are not results of conventions at one time or other deliberately made, as people tacitly assume: contrariwise, they are the natural products of social life which have gradually evolved.» They are of course characteristic of the militant type of society, and tend to fade and decay as industrialism and voluntary co-operation develop.

Part v., ‘Political Institutions,’ contains an account of the evolution of governments as determined by natural causes. Setting out with an unorganized horde including both sexes and all ages, we see that when some public question, such as that of migration or of defense against enemies, has to be decided, the assembled individuals fall more or less clearly into two divisions. The elder, the stronger, and those whose sagacity and courage have been proved by experience, will form the smaller part who carry on the discussion; while the larger part, formed of the young, weak, and undistinguished, will be listeners who do no more than express from time to time assent or dissent. Among the leaders there is sure to be some one distinguished warrior, or aged hunter, who will have more than his individual share in forming the plan finally acted upon. That is to say, the entire assemblage will resolve itself, as in every public meeting of the present day, into three parts, which will eventually develop into that of chief or king; a ministry, or representative and consultative body; and the general electorate. Or, in the formula of evolution, the advance will be from small incoherent social aggregates to great coherent ones, which while becoming integrated will pass from uniformity to multiformity, and from indefiniteness to definiteness of political organization. But the conclusion of profoundest moment, to which all lines of argument converge, is that the possibility of a high social state, political as well as general, fundamentally depends on the cessation of war. Persistent militancy, maintaining adapted institutions, must inevitably prevent, or else neutralize, changes in the direction of more equitable institutions and laws; while permanent peace will of necessity be followed by social ameliorations of every kind. A study of 'Political Institutions' may lead some to think whether the arrangements they are advocating involve increase of that public regulation characterizing the militant type, or whether they tend to produce that better regulation, that greater individuality, and that more extended voluntary co-operation, characterizing the industrial type.

Among social phenomena, those presented by 'Ecclesiastical Institutions,' Part vi., illustrate very clearly the general law of evolution. From the primitive undifferentiated social aggregate, in which domestic, civil, and religious subordination are at first carried on in like ways by the same agencies, develops the definite, coherent, and heterogeneous ecclesiastical organization. With this structural differentiation is a functional differentiation of deep and profound significance. Two sacerdotal duties, which were at first parts of the same, have been slowly separating: the first is the carrying on of worship, the second is the insistence on rules of conduct. If we compare modern with mediæval Europeans, when fasts were habitual, penances common, and men made pilgrimages and built shrines, we see that with social progress has gone a marked diminution of religious observances, and a marked increase in ethical injunctions and exhortations. At the present day dogmatic theology, with its promises of rewards and threats of damnation, bears a diminishing ratio to the insistences on justice, honesty, kindness, and sincerity. And now, what may we infer will be the evolution of religious ideas and sentiments throughout the future? «The conception of the First Cause, which has been enlarging from the beginning, must go on enlarging, until by disappearance of its limits it becomes a consciousness which transcends the forms of distinct thought, though it forever remains a consciousness.» «One truth must grow ever clearer,— the truth that there is an Inscrutable Existence everywhere manifested, to which man can conceive neither beginning nor end. Amid the mysteries which become the more mysterious the more they are thought about, there will remain the one absolute certainty, that he is ever in the presence of an Infinite and Eternal Energy, from which all things proceed.»

In due course, were they written, should here follow the remaining parts of the 'Principles of Sociology,' dealing with Progress—Linguistic, Intellectual, Moral, Æsthetic; but as Mr. Spencer says in the preface to the last volume he has written, for an invalid of seventy-six to deal adequately with topics so extensive and complex is obviously impossible. In strict order these parts should of course have appeared before the 'Principles of Ethics'; but Mr. Spencer thought it better to pass over them, fearing that the state of his health, which for some years had been below its usual low average, might prevent his completing that part of the Philosophy to which all the preceding volumes led, and which, with many others of the highest intellect, he thought to be the most important of all. This work was completed in April 1893, although the first part, 'The Data of Ethics,' had been published some years previously; Mr. Spencer «being the more anxious to indicate in outline, if he cannot complete, this final work, because the establishment of rules of right conduct on a scientific basis is a pressing need. Now that moral injunctions are losing the authority given by their supposed sacred origin, the secularization of morals is becoming imperative. Few things can happen more disastrous than the decay and death of a regulative system no longer fit, before another and fitter regulative system has grown up to replace it.»

Part i. of the 'Principles of Ethics'—the 'Data of Ethics'—is concerned with the various views which may be held about conduct; and shows that «no school can avoid for the ultimate moral aim a desirable state of feeling, called by whatever name—gratification, enjoyment, happiness. Pleasure somewhere, at some time, to some being or beings, is an inexpugnable element of the conception.» We then have those generalizations furnished by Biology, Psychology, and Sociology, which underlie a true theory of living; passing on to the discussion on Selfishness and Unselfishness,—«egoism and altruism,» —showing that a pure and unqualified form of either is impossible, and that there must be a compromise or «conciliation»; which leads us, on the evolution hypothesis, to a consideration of absolute and relative ethics, or the conduct of the ideal man as existing in the ideal social state, and the conduct of man as he is in existing society, surrounded by the evils of a not perfect adaptation.

Part ii., 'The Inductions of Ethics,' is a statement of those rules of human action which are registered as essential laws by all civilized nations: in other words, the generalizations of expediency. Disregarding the conventional limits of ethics, here are treated such matters as aggression, robbery, revenge, justice, generosity, humanity, veracity, obedience, industry, temperance, and chastity: and we are shown that with militancy goes pride in aggression and robbery, revenge and lying, obedience to despotic rulers, and contempt for industry; while with industrialism all these feelings are reversed,—leading to the not unreasonable inference that there needs but a continuance of absolute peace externally, and non-aggression internally, to insure the molding of man into a form naturally characterized by all the virtues!

Part iii., 'The Ethics of Individual Life,' is short, and deals with those modes of private action which must result from the eventual equilibration of internal desires and external needs. The headings of the chapters — Activity, Rest, Nutrition, Stimulation, Culture, Amusements, Marriage, and Parenthood — are instructive as showing the scope here given to «Ethics.» Generally, this division gives definiteness to the idea of proportion; to the maintenance, that is, of balanced amounts of the activities, bodily and mental, required for complete health and happiness. Until the activities are spontaneously regulated by the natural promptings, these ethics must keep clearly in view, and continually emphasize, the needs to which the nature has to be adjusted; but the nature must not be too much strained out of its inherited form, for the normal remolding can go on but slowly.

Part iv., 'Justice,' coincides in area with the author's first work alluded to above, 'Social Statics,' but differs in its treatment, in leaving out entirely all supernaturalistic interpretation; in definitely setting forth and elaborating a biological origin for Ethics; and in making much more frequent use of inductive verification. The formula of Justice here given is most important, and of far-reaching consequences in Mr. Spencer's individualistic theory of politics. It is, «*Every man is free to do that which he wills, provided he infringes not the equal freedom of any other man.*» Calling the several particular freedoms of each man his *rights*, we find them enumerated under such titles as physical integrity, free motion, property, free exchange and contract, free industry, free belief and worship, free speech and publication. And absolute Ethics asserts each of these. But the preservation of the species, or that variety of it constituting a society, being an end which must take precedence of individual preservation, it follows that relative Ethics justifies, and indeed warrants, such equitably distributed taxation, whether of property, industry, belief, or what not, as may be required for maintaining social order and safety. There has still to be considered, from the ethical point of view, the political position of women. Now, men are liable to furnish contingents to the army and the navy; hence, ethically considered, as women have not to furnish them, their equal «political rights» cannot be entertained until there is permanent peace, when only will it be possible to consider such equalization. The rights of children are complicated by the fact that while at first they are dependent on their parents for general sustentation, they but gradually and slowly grow out of this state and become independent and able to support themselves. 'Justice' then goes on to consider the duties of the State, which are defined as the maintenance of the conditions under which each citizen may gain the fullest life compatible with the fullest lives of his fellow-citizens. And many reasons are given that this can only be done efficiently by limiting as far as possible the number and variety of those duties.

In Part v. we have 'Negative Beneficence,'— a few short chapters dealing with those minor self-restraints which are dictated by what may be called passive sympathy. Free competition, free contract, undeserved payments, displays of ability, and the administration of blame and praise, are all areas in which negative beneficence may legitimately be displayed. The most eminent professional men may so restrain their practice by enlarged fees, as not to ruin those only a little less able; the unexpected occurrence of rock in a tunnel which has been contracted for, may justify a payment beyond the price contracted for; unmusical street musicians without their undeserved payments would take to some occupation for which they are less unfit; and those capable of monopolizing the whole attention of a dinner party may so restrain themselves as to allow the less distinguished to join in the exchange of thoughts. The origin of the obligation to this beneficence is of course conduciveness to happiness, immediate or remote, or both; and consequent conduciveness to maintenance of the species or the variety, regarded as hereafter the recipient of increased happiness.

This being the origin also of 'Positive Beneficence,' we are naturally led on to Part vi., comprehending all those modes of conduct dictated by active sympathy, which imply pleasure in giving pleasure,— modes of conduct that social adaptation has induced and must render ever more general; and which, in becoming universal, must fill to the full the possible measure of human happiness. Of the various beneficences here treated are the marital, the parental, the filial, aid to the sick and injured, to friends, to poor, and social and political altruism. Beyond these there is the beneficent regulation of conduct toward those who occupy positions of subordination; and here is a large sphere opened for the anodyne influence of sympathy. Along with the substitution of industrialism for militancy, there has been a relaxation of those customs which remind men of their respective grades, until we now find one trait of a true gentleman defined as the ability successfully to make those who rank below him in the social scale, at ease in his presence. And here we are brought round once more to the fact that our present social state is transitional. The dictates of absolute ethics being kept before us as the ideal, we must little by little mold the real into conformity with them as fast as the nature of things permits; meanwhile letting the chief temporary function of beneficence be to mitigate the sufferings accompanying the transition. The miseries of re-adaptation are necessary; but there are accompanying unnecessary miseries which may with universal advantage be excluded.

«It seems not only rational to believe in some further evolution, but irrational to doubt it — irrational to suppose that the causes which have in the past worked such wonderful effects, will in the future work no effects. Not expecting that any existing society will reach a high organization, nor that any of the varieties of men now living will become fully adapted to social life, a few yet look forward . . . to the evolution of a Humanity adjusted to the requirements of its life. And along with this belief there arises, in an increasing number, the desire to further the development. . . . Hereafter, the highest ambition of the beneficent will be to have a share — even though an utterly inappreciable and unknown share — in the 'making of Man.' Experience occasionally shows that there may arise extreme interest in pursuing entirely unselfish ends; and as time goes on, there will be more and more of those whose unselfish end will be the further evolution of Humanity. While contemplating from the heights of thought that far-off life of the race never to be enjoyed by them, but only by a remote posterity, they will feel a calm pleasure in the consciousness of having aided the advance towards it.»

These words end the 'System of Synthetic Philosophy.' Before, however, making any general remarks upon it, we will allude to two works which the author completed while it was in progress.

The one was 'The Study of Sociology,' published simultaneously in the Contemporary Review in England, and in the first numbers of the Popular Science Monthly in America, in 1873; subsequently in the 'International Scientific Series,' and then in the library edition, making it uniform with all the author's other works. After 'Education' it is the most popular, very many thousands having been sold,— a fact in part attributable to the literary style, which differs entirely from that of the 'System' in being as light and popular as the subject-matter permits. The early chapters deal with the crying need there is for a science of Society: or to put it in other words, for a science which may serve to the representatives in parliaments and senates as a guide for the making of laws and enactments for the general benefit of the States; which shall serve to point out the broad principles which should underlie the regulation of matters in a corporate society. The difficulties of such a science are then more or less completely dealt with. Beyond the objective difficulties,—the vitiations of evidence due to random observation, enthusiasms, prepossessions, self-interests, and so forth,—there are the subjective difficulties due to the emotions and intellect of the observer, the bias caused by his education, by his patriotism, by the class to which he belongs, by his early political surroundings,—whether Tory, Liberal, or Republican,—by his religious environment, and by the general discipline to which he has been subjected. The work concludes with the sciences best adapted to train an intellect for such study.

The other work, 'The Man *versus* the State,' in four parts, was originally published in the Contemporary Review for 1884; and is now included, as previously mentioned, in one volume with the third edition of 'Social Statics.' The first part is entitled 'The New Toryism,' and shows how Toryism and Liberalism originally emerged, the one from militancy or compulsory co-operation, and the other from industrialism or voluntary co-operation. But as Liberalism has in recent years been extending the system of compulsion in many, if not all directions, it is merely a new form of Toryism.

The second part, 'The Coming Slavery,' is devoted to a logical examination of socialism; and demonstrates how, if its development be unfettered, it can lead to no other result than slavery, neither more nor less. 'The Sins of Legislators' forms the title of the third part; and shows how the legislator is morally blameless or morally blameworthy, according as he has or has not made himself acquainted with the several classes of facts obtainable by a study of legislative experiences, and their results, in former years. «The legislator who is wholly or in great part uninformed concerning the matters of fact which he must examine before his opinion on a proposed law can be of any value, and who nevertheless helps to pass that law, can no more be absolved if misery and mortality result, than the journeyman druggist can be absolved when death is caused by the medicine he ignorantly prescribes.» The great political superstition of the past was the divine right of kings. 'The Great Political Superstition' of the present is the divine right of parliaments. The author here in the fourth part shows this to be really the divine right of majorities. «This is the current theory which all accept without proof, as self-evident truth.» Criticism, however, shows it to be the reverse; and hence the conclusion is drawn that «The function of Liberalism in the past was that of putting a limit to the power of kings. The function of true Liberalism in the future will be that of putting a limit to the powers of parliaments.»

Since the foregoing, Mr. Spencer has published several important essays on the biological question, Are acquired characters inherited? affirming, in contradistinction to Weissmann, that they are, and supporting his contentions with a mass of facts which had previously not been utilized in this connection. This problem is so extremely complex that no definite and generally accepted conclusion seems at present possible.

What approval, or what criticism, is it possible to pass upon the great work of so great a man? None, will be the answer of all those, if any there be, who thoroughly comprehend the implications of this vast system of thought. We are too near to be able to get the perspective necessary to see its true relations. Perhaps at some future time, in decades and centuries to come, when minds are more attuned to the keynote of evolution, will it be possible to form some adequate conception of its comparative relation to knowledge in general. In the mean time we must rest satisfied with the opinions that have been formed by those most capable of judging.

The strength of Mr. Spencer's writings lies first in the absolute perfection of his logic: to use a mechanical analogy, they are as it were the outpourings of a perfect logical machine, whose levers and cranks are so adjusted as to work without the possibility of error; a loom in which no strand of weft or woof has ever become entangled, and from which the finest cloth is drawn without spot or blemish. Deduction, Induction, and Verification are so perfectly blended that in this nineteenth century it seems impossible to conceive their higher development. The constituent parts of this logical method which usually excite the greatest wonder and surprise are the brilliant and unsurpassed power of generalization, which is ever present, and which unites in one whole, subjects which at first appear to be as far removed as the antipodes upon our globe. This of course implies the knowledge of an immense range of subjects; and any one reading through, say only one volume such as 'First Principles,' may easily count up more than the metaphorical «speaking acquaintance» with over thirty clearly and well defined sciences, commencing with Anatomy at one end of the alphabet, and ending with Zoölogy at the other. How accurate this knowledge is, may be seen by the currency his writings have amongst men of pure science,— meaning by this term, specialists in the smaller departments and branches of human understanding. Any errors of detail would have been fatal to this vogue. At the same time we are bound to admit that amongst metaphysicians, or philosophers *pur et simple*, Mr. Spencer has not so large a following. It is quite possible, however, that this may be only temporary; and that as years roll on, more may rally to the standard of a philosophy based on a greater knowledge of the human understanding than has ever before been brought to the world's notice.

One broad result stands out ever clearer. Mr. Spencer's development and applications of the theory of Evolution have more profoundly influenced contemporary thought, in every branch of life, than the work of any other modern thinker. It is not for no purpose that he has devoted the entire energies of an invalid to give an account to us, not only of the world on which we live, and of the other worlds which night alone shows forth, but of the whole Universe containing worlds of which we reck not.

J. Howard Collins.

MANNERS AND FASHION

From 'Illustrations of Universal Progress'

Whoever has studied the physiognomy of political meetings cannot fail to have remarked a connection between democratic opinions and peculiarities of costume. At a Chartist demonstration, a lecture on Socialism, or a *soirée* of the Friends of Italy, there will be seen many among the audience, and a still larger ratio among the speakers, who get themselves up in a style more or less unusual. One gentleman on the platform divides his hair down the centre, instead of on one side; another brushes it back off the forehead, in the fashion known as "bringing out the intellect"; a third has so long forsworn the scissors that his locks sweep his shoulders. A considerable sprinkling of mustaches may be observed; here and there an imperial; and occasionally some courageous breaker of conventions exhibits a full-grown beard.* This nonconformity in hair is countenanced by various nonconformities in dress, shown by others of the assemblage. Bare necks, shirt-collars *à la* Byron, waistcoats cut Quaker fashion, wonderfully shaggy great-coats, numerous oddities in form and color, destroy the monotony usual in crowds. Even those exhibiting no conspicuous peculiarity frequently indicate, by something in the pattern or make-up of their clothes, that they pay small regard to what their tailors tell them about the prevailing taste. And when the gathering breaks up, the varieties of head-gear displayed — the number of caps, and the abundance of felt hats — suffice to prove that were the world at large like-minded, the black cylinders which tyrannize over us would soon be deposed.

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* This was written before mustaches and beards had become common.

The foreign correspondence of our daily press shows that this relationship between political discontent and the disregard of customs exists on the Continent also. Red republicanism has always been distinguished by its hirsuteness. The authorities of Prussia, Austria, and Italy, alike recognize certain forms of hat as indicative of disaffection, and fulminate against them accordingly. In some places the wearer of a blouse runs the risk of being classed among the *suspects;* and in others, he who would avoid the bureau of police must beware how he goes out in any but the ordinary colors. Thus democracy abroad, as at home, tends towards personal singularity.

Nor is this association of characteristics peculiar to modern times, or to reformers of the State. It has always existed; and it has been manifested as much in religious agitations as in political ones. Along with dissent from the chief established opinions and arrangements, there has ever been some dissent from the customary social practices. The Puritans, disapproving of the long curls of the Cavaliers, as of their principles, cut their own hair short, and so gained the name of « Roundheads.» The marked religious nonconformity of the Quakers was marked by an equally marked nonconformity of manners,— in attire, in speech, in salutation. The early Moravians not only believed differently, but at the same time dressed differently and lived differently, from their fellow-Christians.

That the association between political independence and independence of personal conduct is not a phenomenon of to-day only, we may see alike in the appearance of Franklin at the French court in plain clothes, and in the white hats worn by the last generation of radicals. Originality of nature is sure to show itself in more ways than one. The mention of George Fox's suit of leather, or Pestalozzi's school name, « Harry Oddity,» will at once suggest the remembrance that men who have in great things diverged from the beaten track, have frequently done so in small things likewise. Minor illustrations of this truth may be gathered in almost every circle. We believe that whoever will number up his reforming and rationalist acquaintances, will find among them more than the usual proportion of those who in dress or behavior exhibit some degree of what the world calls eccentricity.

If it be a fact that men of revolutionary aims in politics or religion are commonly revolutionists in custom also, it is not less a fact that those whose office it is to uphold established arrangements in State and church are also those who most adhere to the social forms and observances bequeathed to us by past generations. Practices elsewhere extinct still linger about the headquarters of government. The monarch still gives assent to Acts of Parliament in the old French of the Normans; and Norman French terms are still used in law. Wigs such as those we see depicted in old portraits, may yet be found on the heads of judges and barristers. The Beefeaters at the Tower wear the costume of Henry VII.th's body-guard. The university dress of the present year varies but little from that worn soon after the Reformation. The claret-colored coat, knee-breeches, lace shirt frills, ruffles, white silk stockings, and buckled shoes, which once formed the usual attire of a gentleman, still survive as the court dress. And it need scarcely be said that at levées and drawing-rooms, the ceremonies are prescribed with an exactness, and enforced with a rigor, not elsewhere to be found.

Can we consider these two series of coincidences as accidental and unmeaning? Must we not rather conclude that some necessary relationship obtains between them? Are there not such things as a constitutional conservatism, and a constitutional tendency to change? Is there not a class which clings to the old in all things; and another class so in love with progress as often to mistake novelty for improvement? Do we not find some men ready to bow to established authority of whatever kind; while others demand of every such authority its reason, and reject it if it fails to justify itself? And must not the minds thus contrasted tend to become respectively conformist and nonconformist, not only in politics and religion but in other things? Submission, whether to a government, to the dogmas of ecclesiastics, or to that code of behavior which society at large has set up, is essentially of the same nature; and the sentiment which induces resistance to the despotism of rulers, civil or spiritual, likewise induces resistance to the despotism of the world's opinion. Look at them fundamentally, and all enactments, alike of the legislature, the consistory, and the saloon,—all regulations formal or virtual,—have a common character: they are all limitations of man's freedom. "Do this — Refrain from that," are the blank formulas into which they may all be written: and in each case the understanding is that obedience will bring approbation here and paradise hereafter; while disobedience will entail imprisonment, or sending to Coventry, or eternal torments, as the case may be. And if restraints, however named, and through whatever apparatus of means exercised, are one in their action upon men, it must happen that those who are patient under one kind of restraint are likely to be patient under another; and conversely, that those impatient of restraint in general, will on the average tend to show their impatience in all directions.

That Law, Religion, and Manners are thus related — that their respective kinds of operation come under one generalization — that they have in certain contrasted characteristics of men a common support and a common danger — will, however, be most clearly seen on discovering that they have a common origin. Little as from present appearances we should suppose it, we shall yet find that at first the control of religion, the control of laws, and the control of manners, were all one control. However incredible it may now seem, we believe it to be demonstrable that the rules of etiquette, the provisions of the statute-book, and the commands of the Decalogue, have grown from the same root. If we go far enough back into the ages of primeval Fetishism, it becomes manifest that originally Deity, Chief, and Master of the Ceremonies were identical. To make good these positions, and to show their bearing on what is to follow, it will be necessary here to traverse ground that is in part somewhat beaten, and at first sight irrelevant to our topic. We will pass over it as quickly as consists with the exigencies of the argument.

That the earliest social aggregations were ruled solely by the will of the strong man, few dispute. That from the strong man proceeded not only monarchy, but the conception of a God, few admit; much as Carlyle and others have said in evidence of it. If, however, those who are unable to believe this will lay aside the ideas of God and man in which they have been educated, and study the aboriginal ideas of them, they will at least see some probability in the hypothesis. Let them remember that before experience had yet taught men to distinguish between the possible and the impossible, and while they were ready on the slightest suggestion to ascribe unknown powers to any object and make a fetish of it, their conceptions of humanity and its capacities were necessarily vague, and without specific limits. The man who, by unusual strength or cunning, achieved something that others had failed to achieve, or something which they did not understand, was considered by them as differing from themselves; and as we see in the belief of some Polynesians that only their chiefs have souls, or in that of the ancient Peruvians that their nobles were divine by birth, the ascribed difference was apt to be not one of degree only, but one of kind.

Let them remember next, how gross were the notions of God, or rather of gods, prevalent during the same era and afterwards: how concretely gods were conceived as men of specific aspects dressed in specific ways; how their names were literally «the strong,» «the destroyer,» «the powerful one»; how, according to the Scandinavian mythology, the «sacred duty of blood revenge» was acted on by the gods themselves; and how they were not only human in their vindictiveness, their cruelty, and their quarrels with each other, but were supposed to have amours on earth, and to consume the viands placed on their altars. Add to which, that in various mythologies—Greek, Scandinavian, and others—the oldest beings are giants; that according to a traditional genealogy, the gods, demigods, and in some cases men, are descended from these after the human fashion; and that while in the East we hear of sons of God who saw the daughters of men that they were fair, the Teutonic myths tell of unions between the sons of men and the daughters of the gods.

Let them remember, too, that at first the idea of death differed widely from that which we have; that there are still tribes who on the decease of one of their number attempt to make the corpse stand, and put food into his mouth; that the Peruvians had feasts at which the mummies of their dead Incas presided, when, as Prescott says, they paid attention «to these insensible remains as if they were instinct with life»; that among the Fejees it is believed that every enemy has to be killed twice; that the Eastern Pagans give extension and figure to the soul, and attribute to it all the same substances, both solid and liquid, of which our bodies are composed; and that it is the custom among most barbarous races to bury food, weapons, and trinkets along with the dead body, under the manifest belief that it will presently need them.

Lastly, let them remember that the other world, as originally conceived, is simply some distant part of this world; some

Elysian fields, some happy hunting-ground,—accessible even to the living, and to which, after death, men travel in anticipation of a life analogous in general character to that which they led before. Then, co-ordinating these general facts,—the ascription of unknown powers to chiefs and medicine-men; the belief in deities having human forms, passions, and behavior; the imperfect comprehension of death as distinguished from life; and the proximity of the future abode to the present, both in position and character,—let them reflect whether they do not almost unavoidably suggest the conclusion that the aboriginal god is the dead chief; the chief not dead in our sense, but gone away, carrying with him food and weapons to some rumored region of plenty, some promised land whither he had long intended to lead his followers, and whence he will presently return to fetch them.

This hypothesis, once entertained, is seen to harmonize with all primitive ideas and practices. The sons of the deified chief reigning after him, it necessarily happens that all early kings are held descendants of the gods; and the fact that alike in Assyria, Egypt, among the Jews, Phœnicians, and ancient Britons, kings' names were formed out of the names of the gods, is fully explained.

From this point onwards these two kinds of authority, at first complicated together as those of principal and agent, become slowly more and more distinct. As experience accumulates, and ideas of causation grow more precise, kings lose their supernatural attributes; and instead of God-king, become God-descended king, God-appointed king, the Lord's anointed, the vicegerent of Heaven, ruler reigning by divine right. The old theory, however, long clings to men in feeling after it has disappeared in name; and «such divinity doth hedge a king» that even now, many on first seeing one feel a secret surprise at finding him an ordinary sample of humanity. The sacredness attaching to royalty attaches afterwards to its appended institutions,—to legislatures, to laws. Legal and illegal are synonymous with right and wrong; the authority of parliament is held unlimited; and a lingering faith in governmental power continually generates unfounded hopes from its enactments. Political skepticism, however, having destroyed the divine prestige of royalty, goes on ever increasing, and promises ultimately to reduce the State to a purely secular institution, whose regulations are limited in their sphere, and have no other authority than the general will. Meanwhile, the religious control has been little by little separating itself from the civil, both in its essence and in its forms. . . .

Thus alike in authority, in essence, and in form, political and spiritual rule have been ever more widely diverging from the same root. That increasing division of labor which marks the progress of society in other things, marks it also in this separation of government into civil and religious; and if we observe how the morality which forms the substance of religions in general is beginning to be purified from the associated creeds, we may anticipate that this division will be ultimately carried much further.

Passing now to the third species of control, that of manners, we shall find that this too while it had a common genesis with the others, has gradually come to have a distinct sphere and a special embodiment. Among early aggregations of men before yet social observances existed, the sole forms of courtesy known were the signs of submission to the strong man; as the sole law was his will, and the sole religion the awe of his supposed supernaturalness. Originally, ceremonies were modes of behavior to the God-king. Our commonest titles have been derived from his names. And all salutations were primarily worship paid to him. Let us trace out these truths in detail, beginning with titles.

The fact already noticed, that the names of early kings among divers races are formed by the addition of certain syllables to the names of their gods,—which certain syllables, like our *Mac* and *Fitz*, probably mean «son of,» or «descended from,»—at once gives meaning to the term *Father* as a divine title. And when we read, in Selden, that «the composition out of these names of Deities was not only proper to Kings: their Grandes and more honorable Subjects» [no doubt members of the royal race] «had sometimes the like,»—we see how the term *Father*, properly used by these also, and by their multiplying descendants, came to be a title used by the people in general. And it is significant, as bearing on this point, that among the most barbarous nations of Europe, where belief in the divine nature of the ruler still lingers, *Father* in this higher sense is still a regal distinction. When, again, we remember how the divinity at first ascribed to kings was not a complimentary fiction but a supposed fact; and how, further, under the Fetish philosophy the celestial bodies are believed to be personages who once lived among men,—we see that the appellations of Oriental rulers, «Brother to the Sun," etc., were probably once expressive of a genuine belief; and have simply, like many other things, continued in use after all meaning has gone out of them. We may infer too that the titles God, Lord, Divinity, were given to primitive rulers literally; that the *nostra divinitas* applied to the Roman emperors, and the various sacred designations that have been borne by monarchs, down to the still extant phrase "Our Lord the King," are the dead and dying forms of what were once living facts. From these names, God, Father, Lord, Divinity,—originally belonging to the God-king, and afterwards to God and the king,—the derivation of our commonest titles of respect is clearly traceable.

There is reason to think that these titles were originally proper names. Not only do we see among the Egyptians, where Pharaoh was synonymous with king, and among the Romans, where to be Cæsar meant to be emperor, that the proper names of the greatest men were transferred to their successors, and so became class names; but in the Scandinavian mythology we may trace a human title of honor up to the proper name of a divine personage. In Anglo-Saxon, *bealdor* or *baldor* means *Lord;* and Balder is the name of the favorite of Odin's sons—the gods who with him constitute the Teutonic Pantheon. How these names of honor became general is easily understood. The relatives of the primitive kings—the grandees described by Selden as having names formed on those of the gods, and shown by this to be members of the divine race—necessarily shared in the epithets, such as *Lord*, descriptive of superhuman relationships and nature. Their ever multiplying offspring inheriting these, gradually rendered them comparatively common. And then they came to be applied to every man of power: partly from the fact that in these early days, when men conceived divinity simply as a stronger kind of humanity, great persons could be called by divine epithets with but little exaggeration; partly from the fact that the unusually potent were apt to be considered as unrecognized or illegitimate descendants of "the strong, the destroyer, the powerful one"; and partly also from compliment and the desire to propitiate.

Progressively as superstition diminished, this last became the sole cause. And if we remember that it is the nature of compliment, as we daily hear it, to attribute more than is due; that in the constantly widening application of "esquire," in the perpetual repetition of «your Honor» by the fawning Irishman, and in the use of the name «gentleman» to any coalheaver or dustman by the lower classes of London, we have current examples of the depreciation of titles consequent on compliment; and that in barbarous times, when the wish to propitiate was stronger than now, this effect must have been greater,— we shall see that there naturally arose an extensive misuse of all early distinctions. Hence the facts that the Jews called Herod a god; that Father, in its higher sense, was a term used among them by servants to masters; that Lord was applicable to any person of worth and power. Hence too the fact that in the later periods of the Roman Empire, every man saluted his neighbor as Dominus and Rex.

But it is in the titles of the Middle Ages, and in the growth of our modern ones out of them, that the process is most clearly seen. Herr, Don, Signior, Seigneur, Señor, were all originally names of rulers — of feudal lords. By the complimentary use of these names to all who could on any pretense be supposed to merit them, and by successive degradations of them from each step in the descent to a still lower one, they have come to be common forms of address. At first the phrase in which a serf accosted his despotic chief, *mein herr* is now familiarly applied in Germany to ordinary people. The Spanish title Don, once proper to noblemen and gentlemen only, is now accorded to all classes. So too is it with Signior in Italy. Seigneur and Monseigneur, by contraction in Sieur and Monsieur, have produced the term of respect claimed by every Frenchman. And whether Sire be or be not a like contraction of Signior, it is clear that, as it was borne by sundry of the ancient feudal lords of France,— who, as Selden says, «affected rather to be stiled by the name of Sire than Baron, as Le Sire de Montmorencie, Le Sire de Beaulieu, and the like,» — and as it has been commonly used to monarchs, our word Sir, which is derived from it, originally meant lord or king. Thus too is it with feminine titles. Lady — which according to Horne Tooke means *exalted*, and was at first given only to the few — is now given to all women of education. Dame — once an honorable name, to which in old books we find the epithets of «high-born» and «stately» affixed — has now, by repeated widenings of its application, become relatively a term of contempt. And if we trace the compound of this, *Ma Dame*, through its contractions,— Madam, ma'am, mam, mum,— we find that the « Yes'm » of Sally to her mistress is originally equivalent to « Yes, my Exalted, » or « Yes, your Highness. » Throughout, therefore, the genesis of words of honor has been the same. Just as with the Jews and with the Romans, has it been with the modern Europeans. Tracing these every-day names to their primitive significations of *lord* and *king*, and remembering that in aboriginal societies these were applied only to the gods and their descendants, we arrive at the conclusion that our familiar Sir and Monsieur are, in their primary and expanded meanings, terms of adoration.

Further to illustrate this gradual depreciation of titles, and to confirm the inference drawn, it may be well to notice in passing that the oldest of them have, as might be expected, been depreciated to the greatest extent. Thus, master — a word proved by its derivation and by the similarity of the connate words in other languages (Fr., maître for *master;* Russ., *master;* Dan., *mester;* Ger., *meister*) to have been one of the earliest in use for expressing lordship — has now become applicable to children only; and under the modification of « Mister, » to persons next above the laborer. Again, knighthood, the oldest kind of dignity, is also the lowest; and Knight Bachelor, which is the lowest order of knighthood, is more ancient than any other of the orders. Similarly too with the peerage: Baron is alike the earliest and least elevated of its divisions. This continual degradation of all names of honor has from time to time made it requisite to introduce new ones, having that distinguishing effect which the originals had lost by generality of use; just as our habit of misapplying superlatives has, by gradually destroying their force, entailed the need for fresh ones. And if, within the last thousand years, this process has produced effects thus marked, we may readily conceive how, during previous thousands, the titles of gods and demigods came to be used to all persons exercising power; as they have since come to be used to persons of respectability.

If from names of honor we turn to phrases of honor, we find similar facts. The Oriental styles of address applied to ordinary people — « I am your slave, » «All I have is yours, » « I am your sacrifice » — attribute to the individual spoken to, the same greatness that Monsieur and My Lord do: they ascribe to him the character of an all-powerful ruler, so immeasurably superior to the speaker as to be his owner. So likewise with the Polish expressions of respect,—"I throw myself under your feet," "I kiss your feet." In our now meaningless subscription to a formal letter, "Your most obedient servant," the same thing is visible. Nay, even in the familiar signature "Yours faithfully," the "yours," if interpreted as originally meant, is the expression of a slave to his master.

All these dead forms were once living embodiments of fact—were primarily the genuine indications of that submission to authority which they verbally assert; were afterwards naturally used by the weak and cowardly to propitiate those above them; gradually grew to be considered the due of such; and by a continually wider misuse, have lost their meanings as Sir and Master have done. That like titles they were in the beginning used only to the God-king, is indicated by the fact that like titles they were subsequently used in common to God and the king. Religious worship has ever largely consisted of professions of obedience, of being God's servants, of belonging to him to do what he will with. Like titles, therefore, these common phrases of honor had a devotional origin.

Perhaps, however, it is in the use of the word *you* as a singular pronoun that the popularizing of what were once supreme distinctions is most markedly illustrated. This speaking of a single individual in the plural, was originally an honor given only to the highest; was the reciprocity of the imperial "we" assumed by such. Yet now, by being applied to successively lower and lower classes, it has become all-but universal. Only by one sect of Christians, and in a few secluded districts, is the primitive *thou* still used. And the *you*, in becoming common to all ranks, has simultaneously lost every vestige of the honor once attaching to it.

But the genesis of manners out of forms of allegiance and worship is above all shown in men's modes of salutation. Note first the significance of the word. Among the Romans, the *salutatio* was a daily homage paid by clients and inferiors to superiors. This was alike the case with civilians and in the army. The very derivation of our word, therefore, is suggestive of submission. Passing to particular forms of obeisance (mark the word again), let us begin with the Eastern one of baring the feet. This was primarily a mark of reverence, alike to a god and a king. The act of Moses before the burning bush, and the practice of the Mahometans, who are sworn on the Koran with their shoes off, exemplify the one employment of it; the custom of the Persians, who remove their shoes on entering the presence of their monarch, exemplifies the other. As usual, however, this homage, paid next to inferior rulers, has descended from grade to grade. In India it is a common mark of respect; a polite man in Turkey always leaves his shoes at the door, while the lower orders of Turks never enter the presence of their superiors but in their stockings; and in Japan, this baring of the feet is an ordinary salutation of man to man.

Take another case. Selden, describing the ceremonies of the Romans, says: — « For whereas it was usual either to kiss the images of their gods, or adoring them, to stand somewhat off before them, solemnly moving the right hand to the lips and then casting it, as if they had cast kisses, to turne the body on the same hand (which was the right forme of Adoration), it grew also by custom, first that the emperors, being next to Deities, and by some accounted as Deities, had the like done to them in acknowledgment of their greatness.» If now we call to mind the awkward salute of a village schoolboy, made by putting his open arm up to his face, and describing a semicircle with his forearm; and if we remember that the salute thus used as a form of reverence in country districts is most likely a remnant of the feudal times,— we shall see reason for thinking that our common wave of the hand to a friend across the street represents what was primarily a devotional act.

Similarly have originated all forms of respect depending upon inclinations of the body. Entire prostration is the aboriginal sign of submission. The passage of Scripture « Thou hast put all under his feet,» and that other one, so suggestive in its anthropomorphism, « The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool,» imply, what the Assyrian sculptures fully bear out, that it was the practice of the ancient God-kings of the East to trample upon the conquered. And when we bear in mind that there are existing savages who signify submission by placing the neck under the foot of the person submitted to, it becomes obvious that all prostration, especially when accompanied by kissing the foot, expressed a willingness to be trodden upon — was an attempt to mitigate wrath by saying, in signs, « Tread on me if you will.» Remembering further that kissing the foot, as of the Pope and of a saint's statue, still continues in Europe to be a mark of extreme reverence; that prostration to feudal lords was once general; and that its disappearance must have taken place, not abruptly, but by gradual modification into something else,— we have ground for deriving from these deepest of humiliations all inclinations of respect, especially as the transition is traceable. The reverence of a Russian serf who bends his head to the ground, and the salaam of the Hindoo, are abridged prostrations; a bow is a short salaam; a nod is a short bow.

Should any hesitate to admit this conclusion, then perhaps on being reminded that the lowest of these obeisances are common where the submission is most abject; that among ourselves the profundity of the bow marks the amount of respect; and lastly, that the bow is even now used devotionally in our churches,— by Catholics to their altars, and by Protestants at the name of Christ,— they will see sufficient evidence for thinking that this salutation also was originally worship.

The same may be said too of the curtsy — or courtesy, as it is otherwise written. Its derivation from *courtoisie*, courteousness,— that is, behavior like that at court,— at once shows that it was primarily the reverence paid to a monarch. And if we call to mind that falling upon the knees, or upon one knee, has been a common obeisance of subjects to rulers; that in ancient manuscripts and tapestries, servants are depicted as assuming this attitude while offering the dishes to their masters at table; and that this same attitude is assumed towards our own Queen at every presentation,— we may infer, what the character of the curtsy itself suggests, that it is an abridged act of kneeling. As the word has been contracted from *courtoisie* into curtsy, so the motion has been contracted from a placing of the knee on the floor to a lowering of the knee towards the floor. Moreover, when we compare the curtsy of a lady with the awkward one a peasant girl makes,— which if continued would bring her down on both knees,— we may see in this last a remnant of that greater reverence required of serfs. And when from considering that simple kneeling of the West, still represented by the curtsy, we pass eastward and note the attitude of the Mahometan worshiper, who not only kneels but bows his head to the ground, we may infer that the curtsy also is an evanescent form of the aboriginal prostration.

In further evidence of this, it may be remarked that there has but recently disappeared from the salutations of men an action having the same proximate derivation with the curtsy. That backward sweep of the foot with which the conventional stage sailor accompanies his bow — a movement which prevailed generally in past generations, when « a bow and a scrape » went together, and which, within the memory of living persons, was made by boys to their schoolmaster, with the effect of wearing a hole in the floor — is pretty clearly a preliminary to going on one knee. A motion so ungainly could never have been intentionally introduced, even if the artificial introduction of obeisances were possible. Hence we must regard it as the remnant of something antecedent: and that this something antecedent was humiliating may be inferred from the phrase « scraping an acquaintance »; which, being used to denote the gaining of favor by obsequiousness, implies that the scrape was considered a mark of servility, — that is, of *serf*-ility.

Consider, again, the uncovering of the head. Almost everywhere this has been a sign of reverence, alike in temples and before potentates; and it yet preserves among us some of its original meaning. Whether it rains, hails, or shines, you must keep your head bare while speaking to the monarch; and on no plea may you remain covered in a place of worship. As usual, however, this ceremony, at first a submission to gods and kings, has become in process of time a common civility. Once an acknowledgment of another's unlimited supremacy, the removal of the hat is now a salute accorded to very ordinary persons; and that uncovering, originally reserved for entrance into « the house of God,» good manners now dictates on entrance into the house of a common laborer.

Standing, too, as a mark of respect, has undergone like extensions in its application. Shown by the practice in our churches to be intermediate between the humiliation signified by kneeling and the self-respect which sitting implies, and used at courts as a form of homage when more active demonstrations of it have been made, this posture is now employed in daily life to show consideration; as seen alike in the attitude of a servant before a master, and in that rising which politeness prescribes on the entrance of a visitor.

Many other threads of evidence might have been woven into our argument. As, for example, the significant fact that if we trace back our still existing law of primogeniture; if we consider it as displayed by Scottish clans, in which not only ownership but government devolved from the beginning on the eldest son of the eldest; if we look further back, and observe that the old titles of Lordship, Signior, Seigneur, Señor, Sire, Sieur, all originally mean senior or elder; if we go Eastward, and find that Sheik has a like derivation, and that the Oriental names for priests — as Pir, for instance — are literally interpreted *old man;* if we note in Hebrew records how primeval is the ascribed superiority of the first-born, how great the authority of elders, and how sacred the memory of patriarchs; and if then we remember that among divine titles are "Ancient of Days," and "Father of Gods and Men"; — we see how completely these facts harmonize with the hypothesis that the aboriginal god is the first man sufficiently great to become a tradition, the earliest whose power and deeds made him remembered; that hence antiquity unavoidably became associated with superiority, and age with nearness in blood to "the powerful one"; that so there naturally arose that domination of the eldest which characterizes all history, and that theory of human degeneracy which even yet survives. . . .

A similar relationship of phenomena was exhibited in Europe during the Middle Ages. While all its governments were autocratic, while feudalism held sway, while the Church was unshorn of its power, while the criminal code was full of horrors and the hell of the popular creed full of terrors,— the rules of behavior were both more numerous and more carefully conformed to than now. Differences of dress marked divisions of rank. Men were limited by law to a certain width of shoe-toes; and no one below a specified degree might wear a cloak less than so many inches long. The symbols on banners and shields were carefully attended to. Heraldry was an important branch of knowledge. Precedence was strictly insisted on. And those various salutes of which we now use the abridgments were gone through in full. Even during our own last century, with its corrupt House of Commons and little-curbed monarchs, we may mark a correspondence of social formalities. Gentlemen were still distinguished from lower classes by dress; people sacrificed themselves to inconvenient requirements,— as powder, hooped petticoats, and towering head-dresses,— and children addressed their parents as Sir and Madam.

A further corollary naturally following this last, and almost indeed forming part of it, is that these several kinds of government decrease in stringency at the same rate. Simultaneously with the decline in the influence of priesthoods, and in the fear of eternal torments,—simultaneously with the mitigation of political tyranny, the growth of popular power, and the amelioration of criminal codes,—has taken place that diminution of formalities and that fading of distinctive marks, now so observable. Looking at home, we may note that there is less attention to precedence than there used to be. No one in our day ends an interview with the phrase "your humble servant." The employment of the word Sir, once general in social intercourse, is at present considered bad breeding; and on the occasions calling for them, it is held vulgar to use the words "Your Majesty," or "Your Royal Highness," more than once in a conversation People no longer formally drink each other's healths; and even the taking wine with each other at dinner has ceased to be fashionable. The taking-off of hats between gentlemen has been gradually falling into disuse. Even when the hat is removed, it is no longer swept out at arm's length, but is simply lifted. Hence the remark made upon us by foreigners, that we take off our hats less than any other nation in Europe; a remark that should be coupled with the other, that we are the freest nation in Europe.

As already implied, this association of facts is not accidental. These titles of address and modes of salutation, bearing about them as they all do something of that servility which marks their origin, become distasteful in proportion as men become more independent themselves, and sympathize more with the independence of others. The feeling which makes the modern gentleman tell the laborer standing bareheaded before him to put on his hat; the feeling which gives us a dislike to those who cringe and fawn; the feeling which makes us alike assert our own dignity, and respect that of others; the feeling which thus leads us more and more to discountenance all forms and names which confess inferiority and submission,—is the same feeling which resists despotic power and inaugurates popular government, denies the authority of the Church and establishes the right of private judgment.

A fourth fact, akin to the foregoing, is that these several kinds of government not only decline together but corrupt together. By the same process that a Court of Chancery becomes a place not for the administration of justice, but for the withholding of it; by the same process that a national church, from being an agency for moral control, comes to be merely a thing of formulas and titles and bishoprics,— by this same process do titles and ceremonies that once had a meaning and a power become empty forms.

Coats of arms which served to distinguish men in battle, now figure on the carriage panels of retired grocers. Once a badge of high military rank, the shoulder-knot has become on the modern footman a mark of servitude. The name Banneret, which once marked a partially created Baron — a Baron who had passed his military "little-go" — is now, under the modification of Baronet, applicable to any one favored by wealth or interest or party feeling. Knighthood has so far ceased to be an honor that men now honor themselves by declining it. The military dignity *Escuyer* has, in the modern Esquire, become a wholly unmilitary affix. Not only do titles and phrases and salutes cease to fulfill their original functions, but the whole apparatus of social forms tends to become useless for its original purpose,— the facilitation of social intercourse. Those most learned in ceremonies, and most precise in the observance of them, are not always the best behaved: as those deepest read in creeds and scriptures are not therefore the most religious; nor those who have the clearest notions of legality and illegality the most honest. Just as lawyers are of all men the least noted for probity; as cathedral towns have a lower moral character than most others: so, if Swift is to be believed, courtiers are "the most insignificant race of people that the island can afford, and with the smallest tincture of good manners."

But perhaps it is in that class of social observances comprehended under the term Fashion, which we must here discuss parenthetically, that this process of corruption is seen with the greatest distinctness. As contrasted with Manners, which dictate our minor acts in relation to other persons, Fashion dictates our minor acts in relation to ourselves While the one prescribes that part of our deportment which directly affects our neighbors, the other prescribes that part of our deportment which is primarily personal, and in which our neighbors are concerned only as spectators. Thus distinguished as they are, however, the two have a common source. For while, as we have shown, Manners originate by imitation of the behavior pursued *towards* the great, Fashion originates by imitation of the behavior *of* the great. While the one has its derivation in the titles, phrases, and salutes, used *to* those in power, the other is derived from the habits and appearances exhibited *by* those in power.

The Carrib mother who squeezes her child's head into a shape like that of the chief; the young savage who makes marks on himself similar to the scars carried by the warriors of his tribe (which is probably the origin of tattooing); the Highlander who adopts the plaid worn by the head of his clan; the courtiers who affect grayness, or limp, or cover their necks, in imitation of their king; and the people who ape the courtiers,—are alike acting under a kind of government connate with that of Manners; and like it too, primarily beneficial. For notwithstanding the numberless absurdities into which this copyism has led the people, from nose-rings to ear-rings, from painted faces to beauty-spots, from shaven heads to powdered wigs, from filed teeth and stained nails to bell-girdles, peaked shoes, and breeches stuffed with bran,—it must yet be concluded that as the strong men, the successful men, the men of will, intelligence, and originality, who have got to the top, are on the average more likely to show judgment in their habits and tastes than the mass, the imitation of such is advantageous.

By-and-by, however, Fashion, corrupting like these other forms of rule, almost wholly ceases to be an imitation of the best, and becomes an imitation of quite other than the best. As those who take orders are not those having a special fitness for the priestly office, but those who see their way to a living by it; as legislators and public functionaries do not become such by virtue of their political insight and power to rule, but by virtue of birth, acreage, and class influence: so the self-elected clique who set the fashion, gain this prerogative not by their force of nature, their intellect, their higher worth or better taste, but gain it solely by their unchecked assumption. Among the initiated are to be found neither the noblest in rank, the chief in power, the best cultured, the most refined, nor those of greatest genius, wit, or beauty; and their reunions, so far from being superior to others, are noted for their inanity. Yet by the example of these sham great, and not by that of the truly great, does society at large now regulate its goings and comings, its hours, its dress, its small usages. As a natural consequence, these have generally little or none of that suitableness which theory of fashion implies they should have. But instead of a continual progress towards greater elegance and convenience, which might be expected to occur did people copy the ways of the really best, or follow their own ideas of propriety, we have a reign of mere whim, of unreason, of change for the sake of change, of wanton oscillations from either extreme to the other — a reign of usages without meaning, times without fitness, dress without taste. And thus life *à la mode*, instead of being life conducted in the most rational manner, is life regulated by spendthrifts and idlers, milliners and tailors, dandies and silly women.

To these several corollaries — that the various orders of control exercised over men have a common origin and a common function, are called out by co-ordinate necessities and co-exist in like stringency, decline together and corrupt together — it now only remains to add that they become needless together. Consequent as all kinds of government are upon the unfitness of the aboriginal man for social life, and diminishing in coerciveness as they all do in proportion as this unfitness diminishes, they must one and all come to an end as humanity acquires complete adaptation to its new conditions. The discipline of circumstances which has already wrought out such great changes in us, must go on eventually to work out yet greater ones. That daily curbing of the lower nature and culture of the higher, which out of cannibals and devil-worshipers has evolved philanthropists, lovers of peace, and haters of superstition, cannot fail to evolve out of these, men as much superior to them as they are to their progenitors. The causes that have produced past modifications are still in action; must continue in action as long as there exists any incongruity between man's desires and the requirements of the social state; and must eventually make him organically fit for the social state. As it is now needless to forbid man-eating and Fetishism, so will it ultimately become needless to forbid murder, theft, and the minor offenses of our criminal code. When human nature has grown into conformity with the moral law, there will need no judges and statute-books; when it spontaneously takes the right course in all things, as in some things it does already, prospects of future reward or punishment will not be wanted as incentives; and when fit behavior has become instinctive, there will need no code of ceremonies to say how behavior shall be regulated.

Thus then may be recognized the meaning, the naturalness, the necessity of those various eccentricities of reformers which we set out by describing. They are not accidental; they are not mere personal caprices, as people are apt to suppose. On the contrary, they are inevitable results of the law of relationship as above illustrated. That community of genesis, function, and decay, which all forms of restraint exhibit, is simply the obverse of the fact at first pointed out, that they have in two sentiments of human nature a common preserver and a common destroyer. Awe of power originates and cherishes them all; love of freedom undermines and periodically weakens them all. The one defends despotism and asserts the supremacy of laws, adheres to old creeds and supports ecclesiastical authority, pays respect to titles and conserves forms; the other, putting rectitude above legality, achieves periodical installments of political liberty, inaugurates Protestantism and works out its consequences, ignores the senseless dictates of Fashion and emancipates men from dead customs. . . .

There needs then a protestantism in social usages. Forms that have ceased to facilitate and have become obstructive—whether political, religious, or other—have ever to be swept away; and eventually are so swept away in all cases. Signs are not wanting that some change is at hand. A host of satirists, led on by Thackeray, have been for years engaged in bringing our sham festivities and our fashionable follies into contempt; and in their candid moods, most men laugh at the frivolities with which they and the world in general are deluded. Ridicule has always been a revolutionary agent. That which is habitually assailed with sneers and sarcasm cannot long survive. Institutions that have lost their roots in men's respect and faith are doomed; and the day of their dissolution is not far off. The time is approaching, then, when our system of social observances must pass through some crisis, out of which it will come purified and comparatively simple.

How this crisis will be brought about, no one can with any certainty say. Whether by the continuance and increase of individual protests, or whether by the union of many persons for the practice and propagation of some better system, the future alone can decide. The influence of dissentients acting without co-operation seems, under the present state of things, inadequate. Standing severally alone, and having no well-defined views; frowned on by conformists, and expostulated with even by those who secretly sympathize with them; subject to petty persecutions, and unable to trace any benefit produced by their example,—they are apt one by one to give up their attempts as hopeless. The young convention-breaker eventually finds that he pays too heavily for his nonconformity. Hating, for example, everything that bears about it any remnant of servility, he determines, in the ardor of his independence, that he will uncover to no one. But what he means simply as a general protest, he finds that ladies interpret into a personal disrespect. Though he sees that from the days of chivalry downwards, these marks of supreme consideration paid to the other sex have been but a hypocritical counterpart to the actual subjection in which men have held them,— a pretended submission to compensate for a real domination,—and though he sees that when the true dignity of woman is recognized, the mock dignities given to them will be abolished, yet he does not like to be thus misunderstood, and so hesitates in his practice.

In other cases, again, his courage fails him. Such of his unconventionalities as can be attributed only to eccentricity, he has no qualms about; for on the whole he feels rather complimented than otherwise in being considered a disregarder of public opinion. But when they are liable to be put down to ignorance, to ill-breeding, or to poverty, he becomes a coward. However clearly the recent innovation of eating some kinds of fish with knife and fork proves the fork-and-bread practice to have had little but caprice as its basis, yet he dares not wholly ignore that practice while fashion partially maintains it. Though he thinks that a silk handkerchief is quite as appropriate for drawing-room use as a white cambric one, he is not altogether at ease in acting out his opinion. Then, too, he begins to perceive that his resistance to prescription brings round disadvantageous results which he had not calculated upon. He had expected that it would save him from a great deal of social intercourse of a frivolous kind,— that it would offend the fools but not the sensible people; and so would serve as a self-acting test by which those worth knowing would be separated from those not worth knowing. But the fools prove to be so greatly in the majority, that by offending them, he closes against himself nearly all the avenues through which the sensible people are to be reached. Thus he finds that his nonconformity is frequently misinterpreted; that there are but few directions in which he dares to carry it consistently out; that the annoyances and disadvantages which it brings upon him are greater than he anticipated; and that the chances of his doing any good are very remote. Hence he gradually loses resolution, and lapses step by step into the ordinary routine of observances.

Abortive as individual protests thus generally turn out, it may possibly be that nothing effectual will be done until there arises some organized resistance to this invisible despotism by which our modes and habits are dictated. It may happen that the government of Manners and Fashion will be rendered less tyrannical, as the political and religious governments have been, by some antagonistic union. Alike in church and State, men's first emancipations from excess of restriction were achieved by numbers, bound together by a common creed or a common political faith. What remained undone while there were but individual schismatics or rebels, was effected when there came to be many acting in concert. It is tolerably clear that these earliest installments of freedom could not have been obtained in any other way; for so long as the feeling of personal independence was weak, and the rule strong, there could never have been a sufficient number of separate dissentients to produce the desired results. Only in these later times, during which the secular and spiritual controls have been growing less coercive, and the tendency toward individual liberty greater, has it become possible for smaller and smaller sects and parties to fight against established creeds and laws; until now men may safely stand even alone in their antagonism.

The failure of individual nonconformity to customs, as above illustrated, suggests that an analogous series of changes may have to be gone through in this case also. It is true that the *lex non scripta* differs from the *lex scripta* in this,— that being unwritten it is more readily altered, and that it has from time to time been quietly ameliorated. Nevertheless we shall find that the analogy holds substantially good. For in this case, as in the others, the essential revolution is not the substituting of any one set of restraints for any other, but the limiting or abolishing the authority which prescribes restraints. Just as the fundamental change inaugurated by the Reformation was not a superseding of one creed by another, but an ignoring of the arbiter who before dictated creeds; just as the fundamental change which Democracy long ago commenced was not from this particular law to that, but from the despotism of one to the freedom of all,— so the parallel change yet to be wrought out in this supplementary government of which we are treating, is not the replacing of absurd usages by sensible ones, but the dethronement of that secret irresponsible power which now imposes our usages, and the assertion of the right of all individuals to choose their own usages. In rules of living, a West End clique is our Pope; and we are all papists, with but a mere sprinkling of heretics. On all who decisively rebel comes down the penalty of excommunication, with its long catalogue of disagreeable and indeed serious consequences.

The liberty of the subject asserted in our Constitution, and ever on the increase, has yet to be wrested from this subtler tyranny. The right of private judgment, which our ancestors wrung from the Church, remains to be claimed from this dictator of our habits. Or as before said, to free us from these idolatries and superstitious conformities, there has still to come a protestantism in social usages. Parallel therefore as is the change to be wrought out, it seems not improbable that it may be wrought out in an analogous way. That influence which solitary dissentients fail to gain, and that perseverance which they lack, may come into existence when they unite. That persecution which the world now visits upon them, from mistaking their nonconformity for ignorance or disrespect, may diminish when it is seen to result from principle. The penalty which exclusion now entails may disappear when they become numerous enough to form visiting circles of their own. And when a successful stand has been made, and the brunt of the opposition has passed, that large amount of secret dislike to our observances which now pervades society may manifest itself with sufficient power to effect the desired emancipation.

Whether such will be the process, time alone can decide. That community of origin, growth, supremacy, and decadence, which we have found among all kinds of government, suggests a community in modes of change also. On the other hand, nature often performs substantially similar operations in ways apparently different. Hence these details can never be foretold.

Meanwhile let us glance at the conclusions that have been reached. On the one side, government (originally one, and afterwards subdivided for the better fulfillment of its functions) must be considered as having ever been, in all its branches,— political, religious, and ceremonial,— beneficial, and indeed absolutely necessary. On the other side, government under all its forms must be regarded as subserving a temporary office, made needful by the unfitness of aboriginal humanity for social life; and the successive diminutions of its coerciveness in State, in church, and in custom, must be looked upon as steps towards its final disappearance. To complete the conception, there requires to be borne in mind the third fact,—that the genesis, the maintenance, and the decline of all governments, however named, are alike brought about by the humanity to be controlled; from which may be drawn the inference that on the average, restrictions of every kind cannot last much longer than they are wanted, and cannot be destroyed much faster than they ought to be.

Society in all its developments undergoes the process of exuviation. These old forms which it successively throws off have all been once vitally united with it; have severally served as the protective envelopes within which a higher humanity was being evolved. They are cast aside only when they become hindrances,—only when some inner and better envelope has been formed; and they bequeath to us all that there was in them good. The periodical abolitions of tyrannical laws have left the administration of justice not only uninjured but purified. Dead and buried creeds have not carried with them the essential morality they contained,—which still exists, uncontaminated by the sloughs of superstition. And all that there is of justice and kindness and beauty, embodied in our cumbrous forms of etiquette, will live perennially when the forms themselves have been forgotten.

EDMUND SPENSER.

EDMUND SPENSER

(1552?–1599)

BY J. DOUGLAS BRUCE

Edmund Spenser was born in London in or shortly before the year 1552. Although the obscurity which hangs about the life and circumstances of the poet's father has never been quite dispelled, it seems at least certain that he belonged to the Lancashire branch of the Spensers; and the family was connected with the «house of auncient fame» of Spencer, which, down to our own day, has continued to bear so honorable a part in the public life of England. The first event in the poet's life of which we have definite knowledge — although even here the precise date is wanting — is his admission to the Merchant Taylors' School of his native city. This event is probably to be referred to the very first year of the existence of this famous school — 1560; but however this may be, in 1568 we find his name in the list of «poore scholers» who were assisted in obtaining their education by the charities of Dean Nowell,— a list, it may be added, which in the subsequent years of the same century was destined to include still other names hardly less illustrious than Spenser's own. To Pembroke Hall, Cambridge, the poet was transferred in the spring of 1569; and there, amidst studies which apparently were often interrupted by ill-health, he passed the next seven years of his life, receiving in due succession the degrees of bachelor and master; but — owing to some disfavor with the authorities, it would seem — making no application for a fellowship, such as would probably otherwise have been made by a student whose tastes were so scholarly and whose means were so limited.

The years of the poet's life which immediately follow his University career are again involved in obscurity. Shadowy, however, as are both the lady and the circumstances, we know that this period was marked by the love affair with Rosalind,— more famous, perhaps, than is justified by the quality of verse which it called forth. To these years too, most probably, we should refer the beginning of Spenser's fateful connection with Ireland, since in 1577 it appears that he accompanied to that unhappy country the then Lord Deputy, Sir Henry Sidney, father of Sir Philip. Two years later he is again in England, and in the house of the powerful Earl of Leicester, brother-in-law of the Lord Deputy Sidney. From here we find him carrying on a literary correspondence with his former college-mate, Gabriel Harvey; in which the perverse metrical theories and insufferable pedantry of the latter are almost atoned for by the genuineness of his friendship for the poet, and the stimulus he afforded to his literary activity. For this must indeed have been with Spenser—if we may judge by the list of works which are mentioned in the course of this correspondence, many of them lost—a period of such intense activity as can be paralleled from the lives of but few poets. The range of his literary experiments extended even to the drama,—the branch of literature which of all seems most alien to his genius; and we hear of the Nine Comedies by the side of the work with which he was about to open the great age of Elizabethan literature.

This work,—the 'Shepherd's Calendar,'—appearing towards the close of the year 1579, justified in the minds of contemporaries as well as posterity the title of "The New Poet," which the author tacitly accepted from his friend and commentator, "E. K." To say nothing of the varied command of metrical forms and of the music of verse which the eclogues in this collection revealed, readers of native poetry recognized in the 'Shepherd's Calendar,' for the first time since Chaucer, a work exhibiting the sustained vigor which is an essential of verse that is worthy of the name of literature. A plan had been adopted of no inconsiderable scope,—one which admitted the treatment of a great if somewhat singular variety of subjects and situations; and notwithstanding occasional grotesqueness of diction or injudicious choice of material,—matters as to which contemporary taste was by no means the same as our own,—or even a curious deficiency in that imaginative glow which the poet was afterwards to exhibit so pre-eminently, this plan had been executed without flagging from beginning to end.

But the year following this great literary success saw Spenser finally drawn into those circumstances which were to determine the sum of his happiness and sorrow during the rest of his too brief career. In the summer of 1580, as secretary to the new Lord Deputy,—Arthur, Lord Grey of Wilton, the stern Arthegall of the 'Faery Queen,'—the poet once more turned his face toward Ireland; in which country, as a servant of the English Crown in various capacities, he was destined to spend the remaining years of his life. Only twice during this period did he revisit his native land before the final year of 1598; when, swept away from Ireland like many another Englishman by the storm of rebellion and devastation, he returned to die in London a broken man, in fortunes if not in spirit. In this savage and untamable Ireland of the closing sixteenth century, the poet who in his works stands furthest aloof of all men from the actual world, was called on to be a witness, and finally an actor, in some of the sternest of the world's work. He was in reality, however, not less an English gentleman than a poet; and possessed not only the sense of civic duty characteristic of his class, but the fibre necessary to support the burdens of public service. Accordingly, by a striking coincidence, we find him at the end of his career, like the other great master of romance in our own century, filling the prosaic yet responsible office of sheriff, at the time when the rebellion of Tyrone burst over Munster, the province of his residence.

After a more than ten years' interval, covering the earlier years of Spenser's life in Ireland,—an interval in publication though not in composition,—in 1590 the ‹Shepherd's Calendar› was followed by the first three books of the ‹Faery Queen.› Six years more elapsed before the remaining books saw the light; but this latter period, including the final year, was marked by the publication of those minor poems, which—in beauty of form at least—constitute a no less precious inheritance of English literature than the ‹Faery Queen› itself. In surveying this great body of work, the impression one receives of its variety is hardly less than that of its power. ‹Mother Hubberd's Tale,› ‹Colin Clout's Come Home Again,› the marriage songs,—to speak of no others,—represent achievements, in the last case of the first rank, in the others of all but the first rank, in their respective literary forms; achievements all the more remarkable, one might say, in view of the absence of English models at the time. Who, for instance, would have suspected in the author of the ‹Faery Queen› one of the keenest of satirists, but for the existence of the first of the above-named poems? Reflection upon the range of power which works so different exhibit, causes us to regret even the loss of those earlier dramatic experiments.

But to the mind of the modern reader the name of Spenser is apt to call up simply the poet of the ‹Faery Queen,›—a work indeed which filled more completely the intellectual life of its author, during a larger proportion of the years of his maturity, than has been the case perhaps with any other poem in literature of equal rank; and it is this work alone which we shall be able to consider, briefly, within the limits of this essay.

We may perhaps best attain a just insight into the nature and essential characteristics of the ‹Faery Queen› by a consideration of its relation to its undoubted model, the ‹Orlando Furioso.› It was unquestionably the example of Ariosto which led Spenser to dedicate his genius to this new representation of the idealized life of chivalry; and it was his object no less than that of his exemplar to render in his pages all the immemorial charm of romance. But the absence of one element from the Italian model could not but be keenly perceptible to the grave, even Puritan, nature of the Northern poet: the element of moral seriousness, which hardly less than the love of beauty was of the very essence of Spenser's genius. To give then a moral basis to this ideal world seemed to Spenser necessary to render it complete even in its beauty, to say nothing of any more directly didactic object he may have had at heart. The method of allegory by which he attempts to supply this basis to the romance-epic, with his plan of the knights representing the twelve Moral and twelve Politic Virtues, seems a mechanical device for effecting his purpose, and indeed soon breaks down of its own weight; yet the nobility of Spenser's nature, his high moral seriousness from which the conception of the allegory sprang, diffuses itself through the whole poem, so that after all he might rightly appear to the great Puritan poet of the next generation as «a better teacher than Scotus or Aquinas.»

Even superior to these qualities of moral earnestness and purity, as an element of power in the 'Faery Queen,' is the passionate love of beauty to which the poet here gives the most luxuriant and vivid expression to be met with in English verse. In no English poet until Keats do we again find this pursuit of ideal beauty in the same degree the dominant element in the poet's genius; and here the superior moral vigor of Spenser supplied a check on the tendencies to sensuous excess, which was wanting in the case of Keats. It is especially in the management of his verse, and in the exercise of his unequaled powers of description, that Spenser's sensibility to beauty and capacity for its expression appear most striking. From no metrical instrument, perhaps, has a poet drawn richer harmonies than Spenser from his immortal stanza; and his descriptive powers, whether applied to the heroic figures who are the actors in his story, or to such splendid conceptions as the Cave of Mammon or the Bower of Bliss, mark the limits perhaps of the achievement of poetry in this direction.

But after all, it is doubtless the ideal aloofness of the world of the 'Faery Queen' from that which lies about us, that gives its greatest charm to the poem. From this new world of the imagination the commonplace is excluded; and if we encounter here again evil and ugliness, they have taken on forms of terror which are hardly less ideal than those of purity and beauty. We wander on at will amidst this endless variety of incident and figure, all steeped in the colors of the imagination, without being reminded that there are bounds to the world we have entered, such as are recalled to us even in the depths of the Forest of Arden.

And finally, the 'Faery Queen' is not without its philosophy,—a philosophy in conformity with the unsubstantiality of its world. In accordance with the nature of Spenser's genius, we must not expect to see him present the problems of destiny and moral evil with the direct and tragic power of the chief masters of human character, as exemplified above all in the dramas of his great contemporary. No other poet, however, has expressed with equal power the mystery of change as the most fundamental of all the conditions of existence, as subjecting to its law the very heart of the world. This mystery of «mutability» seemed to lie like a burden on Spenser's spirit; and it is the depth of his feeling and reflection on this idea which has imparted an incomparable sublimity to the posthumous cantos of the 'Faery Queen,' where the solution to the mystery which Nature proposes, differs perhaps but little after all from that of ages maturer in science.

J. Douglas Bruce

PROTHALAMION; OR, A SPOUSALL VERSE

CALME was the day, and through the trembling ayre
Sweete-breathing Zephyrus did softly play
A gentle spirit, that lightly did delay
Hot Titans beames, which then did glyster fayre;
When I (whom sullein care,
Through discontent of my long fruitlesse stay
In princes court, and expectation vayne
Of idle hopes, which still doe fly away
Like empty shadows, did afflict my brayne)
Walkt forth to ease my payne
Along the shoare of silver-streaming Themmes;
Whose rutty bank, the which his river hemmes,
Was paynted all with variable flowers,
And all the meades adorn'd with dainty gemmes,
Fit to decke maydens bowres,
And crowne their paramours,
Against the brydale day, which is not long:
Sweet Themmes! runne softly, till I end my song.

There, in a meadow, by the rivers side,
A flocke of Nymphes I chauncèd to espy,
All lovely daughters of the flood thereby,
With goodly greenish locks, all loose untyde,
As each had bene a bryde;
And each one had a little wicker basket,
Made of fine twigs, entraylèd curiously,
In which they gathered flowers to fill their flasket,
And with fine fingers cropt full feateously
The tender stalkes on hye.

Of every sort which in that meadow grew
They gathered some: the violet, pallid blew,
The little dazie, that at evening closes,
The virgin lillie, and the primrose trew,
With store of vermeil roses,
To deck their bridegroomes posies
Against the brydale day, which was not long:
Sweet Themmes! runne softly, till I end my song.

With that I saw two Swannes of goodly hewe
Come softly swimming downe along the lee;
Two fairer birds I yet did never see;
The snow, which doth the top of Pindus strew,
Did never whiter shew,
Nor Jove himselfe, when he a swan would be
For love of Leda, whiter did appeare;
Yet Leda was (they say) as white as he,
Yet not so white as these, nor nothing neare;
So purely white they were,
That even the gentle stream, the which them bare,
Seem'd foule to them, and bad his billowes spare
To wet their silken feathers, least they might
Soyle their fayre plumes with water not so fayre,
And marre their beauties bright,
That shone as heavens light,
Against their brydale day, which was not long:
Sweet Themmes! runne softly, till I end my song.

Eftsoones, the Nymphes, which now had flowers their fill,
Ran all in haste to see that silver brood,
As they came floating on the cristal flood;
Whom when they sawe, they stood amazèd still,
Their wondring eyes to fill:
Them seem'd they never saw a sight so fayre,
Of fowles so lovely that they sure did deeme
Them heavenly borne, or to be that same payre
Which through the skie draw Venus silver teeme;
For sure they did not seeme
To be begot of any earthly seede,
But rather angels, or of angels breede:
Yet were they bred of Somers heat, they say,
In sweetest season, when each flower and weede
The earth did fresh aray;
So fresh they seem'd as day,
Even as their brydale day, which was not long:
Sweet Themmes! runne softly, till I end my song.

Then forth they all out of their baskets drew
Great store of flowers, the honour of the field,
That to the sense did fragrant odours yeild,
All which upon those goodly birds they threw,
And all the waves did strew,
That like old Peneus waters they did seeme,
When downe along by pleasant Tempes shore,
Scattred with flowres, through Thessaly they streeme,
That they appeare, through lillies plenteous store,
Like a brydes chamber flore.
Two of those Nymphes, meane while, two garlands bound
Of freshest flowres which in that mead they found,
The which presenting all in trim array,
Their snowie foreheads therewithall they crown'd,
Whilst one did sing this lay,
Prepar'd against that day,—
Against their brydale day, which was not long:
Sweet Themmes! runne softly, till I end my song.

«Ye gentle Birdes! the worlds faire ornament,
And heavens glorie, whom this happie hower
Doth leade unto your lovers blissfull bower,
Joy may you have, and gentle hearts content
Of your loves couplement!
And let faire Venus, that is Queene of Love,
With her heart-quelling Sonne upon you smile,
Whose smile, they say, hath vertue to remove
All loves dislike, and friendships faultie guile
For ever to assoile.
Let endlesse peace your steadfast hearts accord,
And blessed plentie wait upon your bord;
And let your bed with pleasures chast abound,
That fruitfull issue may to you afford,
Which may your foes confound,
And make your joyes redound
Upon your brydale day, which is not long:
Sweet Themmes! runne softly, till I end my song.»

So ended she; and all the rest around
To her redoubled that her undersong,
Which said, their brydale daye should not be long:
And gentle Eccho from the neighbour ground
Their accents did resound.
So forth those joyous Birdes did passe along
Adowne the lee, that to them murmurde low,

As he would speake, but that he lackt a tong,
Yet did by signes his glad affection show,
Making his streame run slow.
And all the foule which in his flood did dwell
'Gan flock about these twaine, that did excell
The rest, so far as Cynthia doth shend
The lesser stars. So they, enrangèd well,
Did on those two attend,
And their best service lend
Against their wedding day, which was not long:
Sweet Themmes! runne softly, till I end my song.

At length they all to mery London came,—
To mery London, my most kyndly nurse,
That to me gave this lifes first native sourse,
Though from another place I take my name,
An house of auncient fame:
There when they came whereas those bricky towres
The which on Themmes brode aged backe doe ryde,
Where now the studious lawyers have their bowers,
There whylome wont the Templer Knights to byde,
Till they decay'd through pride;
Next whereunto there standes a stately place,
Where oft I gaynèd giftes and goodly grace
Of that great lord which therein wont to dwell,
Whose want too well now feels my freendles case;
But ah! here fits not well
Olde woes, but joyes, to tell
Against the brydale daye, which is not long:
Sweet Themmes! runne softly, till I end my song.

Yet therein now doth lodge a noble peer,
Great Englands glory, and the worlds wide wonder,
Whose dreadfull name late through all Spaine did thunder,
And Hercules two pillors standing neere
Did make to quake and feare:
Faire branch of honor, flower of chevalrie!
That fillest England with thy triumphs fame,
Joy have thou of thy noble victorie,
And endlesse happinesse of thine owne name
That promiseth the same;
That through thy prowesse, and victorious armes,
Thy country may be freed from forraine harmes,
And great Elisaes glorious name may ring
Through all the world, fil'd with thy wide alarmes,

Which some brave Muse may sing
To ages following,
Upon the brydale day, which is not long:
Sweet Themmes! runne softly, till I end my song.

From those high towers this noble lord issuing,
Like radiant Hesper, when his golden hayre
In th' ocean billowes he hath bathèd fayre,
Descended to the rivers open vewing,
With a great traine ensuing.
Above the rest were goodly to bee seene
Two gentle Knights of lovely face and feature,
Beseeming well the bower of any queene,
With gifts of wit, and ornaments of nature,
Fit for so goodly stature,
That like the Twins of Jove they seem'd in sight,
Which decke the bauldricke of the heavens bright;
They two, forth pacing to the rivers side,
Receiv'd those two faire Brides, their loves delight;
(Which, at th' appointed tyde,
Each one did make his Bryde,)
Against their brydale day, which is not long:
Sweet Themmes! runne softly, till I end my song.

BELPHŒBE THE HUNTRESS

From the 'Faery Queene'

Eftsoones there steppèd forth
A goodly lady clad in hunters weed,
That seem'd to be a woman of great worth,
And by her stately portance born of heavenly birth.

Her face so fair, as flesh it seemèd not,
But heavenly portrait of bright angels hue,
Clear as the sky, withouten blame or blot,
Through goodly mixture of complexions due;
And in her cheeks the vermeil red did shew
Like roses in a bed of lilies shed,
The which ambrosial odours from them threw,
And gazers' sense with double pleasure fed,
Able to heal the sick and to revive the dead.

In her fair eyes two living lamps did flame,
Kindled above at th' heavenly Makers light,

And darted fiery beams out of the same,
So passing persaunt and so wondrous bright,
That quite bereaved the rash beholder's sight:
In them the blinded god his lustful fire
To kindle oft essay'd, but had no might;
For, with dread majesty and awful ire,
She broke his wanton darts, and quenchèd base desire.

Her ivory forehead full of bounty brave,
Like a broad table did itself dispread,
For Love his lofty triumphs to engrave,
And write the battles of his great godhead:
All good and honour might therein be read;
For there their dwelling was. And when she spake,
Sweet words like dropping honey she did shed;
And twixt the pearls and rubies softly brake
A silver sound, that heavenly music seem'd to make.

Upon her eyelids many graces sate,
Under the shadow of her even brows,
Working belgrades and amorous retrate;
And every one her with a grace endows,
And every one with meekness to her bows:
So glorious mirror of celestial grace,
And sovereign moniment of mortal vows,
How shall frail pen describe her heavenly face,
For fear, through want of skill, her beauty to disgrace?

So fair, and thousand thousand times more fair,
She seem'd, when she presented was to sight:
And was yclad for heat of scorching air,
All in a silken Camus, lily white,
Purfled upon with many a folded plight,
Which all above besprinkled was throughout
With golden aygulets that glist'red bright,
Like twinkling stars; and all the skirt about
Was hemm'd with golden fringe. . . .

Her yellow locks, crispèd like golden wire,
About her shoulders weren loosely shed,
And when the wind amongst them did inspire,
They wavèd like a pennon wide dispread,
And low behind her back were scatterèd;
And whether art it were or heedless hap,
As through the flow'ring forest rash she fled,

In her rude hairs sweet flow'rs themselves did lap,
And flourishing fresh leaves and blossoms did enwrap.

Such as Diana by the sandy shore
Of swift Eurotas, or on Cynthus green,
Where all the nymphs have her unwares forlore,
Wand'reth alone with bow and arrows keen,
To seek her game; or as that famous queen
Of Amazons, whom Pyrrhus did destroy
The day that first of Priam she was seėn,
Did show herself in great triumphant joy,
To succour the weak state of sad afflicted Troy.

THE CAVE OF MAMMON

From the ‹Faery Queene›

«Come thou,» quoth he, «and see.» So by-and-by
Through that thick covert he him led, and found
A darksome way which no man could descry,
That deep descended through the hollow ground,
And was with dread and horror compassèd around.

At length they came into a larger space,
That stretched itself into an ample plain,
Through which a beaten broad highway did trace,
That straight did lead to Pluto's griesly reign:
By that way's side there sate infernal Pain,
And fast beside him sate tumultuous Strife;
The one in hand an iron whip did strain,
The other brandishèd a bloody knife;
And both did gnash their teeth, and both did threaten life.

On th' other side in one consort there sate
Cruel Revenge, and rancorous Despite,
Disloyal Treason, and heart-burning Hate;
But gnawing Jealousy, out of their sight
Sitting alone, his bitter lips did bite;
And trembling Fear still to and fro did fly,
And found no place where safe he shroud him might;
Lamenting Sorrow did in darkness lie;
And Shame his ugly face did hide from living eye.

And over them sad Horror with grim hue
Did always soar, beating his iron wings;

And after him owls and night-ravens flew,
The hateful messengers of heavy things,
Of death and dolour telling sad tidings:
Whiles sad Celeno, sitting on a clift,
A song of bale and bitter sorrow sings,
That heart of flint asunder could have rift;
Which having ended, after him she flieth swift.

All these before the gates of Pluto lay;
By whom they passing spake unto them nought.
But th' Elfin knight with wonder all the way
Did feed his eyes, and fill'd his inner thought.
At last him to a little door he brought,
That to the gate of hell, which gapèd wide,
Was next adjoining, ne them parted ought:
Betwixt them both was but a little stride,
That did the House of Riches from Hell-mouth divide.

Before the door sate self-consuming Care,
Day and night keeping wary watch and ward,
For fear lest Force or Fraud should unaware
Break in, and spoil the treasure there in guard:
Ne would he suffer Sleep once thither-ward
Approach, albe his drowsy den were next;
For next to Death is Sleep to be compared,
Therefore his house is unto his annext:
Here Sleep, there Riches, and Hell-gate them both betwixt.

So soon as Mammon there arrived, the door
To him did open and afforded way:
Him follow'd eke Sir Guyon evermore;
Ne darkness him ne danger might dismay.
Soon as he ent'red was, the door straightway
Did shut, and from behind it forth there leapt
An ugly fiend, more foul than dismal day;
The which with monstrous stalk behind him stept,
And ever as he went due watch upon him kept.

Well hopèd he, ere long that hardy guest,
If ever covetous hand or lustful eye
Or lips he laid on thing that liked him best,
Or ever sleep his eye-strings did untie,
Should be his prey; and therefore still on high
He over him did hold his cruel claws,
Threat'ning with greedy gripe to do him die,

And rend in pieces with his ravenous paws,
If ever he transgress'd the fatal Stygian laws.

That house's form within was rude and strong,
Like an huge cave hewn out of rocky clift,
From whose rough vault the ragged breaches hung
Embost with massy gold of glorious gift;
And with rich metal loaded every rift,
That heavy ruin they did seem to threat;
And over them Arachne high did lift
Her cunning web, and spread her subtle net,
Enwrappèd in foul smoke and clouds more black than jet.

Both roof and floor and walls were all of gold,
But overgrown with dust and old decay,
And hid in darkness, that none could behold
The hue thereof; for view of cheerful day
Did never in that house itself display,
But a faint shadow of uncertain light:
Such as a lamp, whose life does fade away;
Or as the moon, clothèd with cloudy night,
Does show to him that walks in fear and sad affright.

In all that room was nothing to be seen
But huge great iron chests, and coffers strong,
All barr'd with double bands, that none could ween
Them to enforce by violence or wrong;
On every side they placèd were along.
But all the ground with sculls was scatterèd
And dead mens bones, which round about were flung;
Whose lives, it seemèd, whylome there were shed,
And their vile carcasses now left unburièd.

They forward pass; ne Guyon yet spoke word
Till that they came unto an iron door,
Which to them openèd of his own accord,
And show'd of riches such exceeding store
As eye of man did never see before,
Ne ever could within one place be found,
Though all the wealth which is or was of yore
Could gather'd be through all the world around,
And that above were added to that under ground.

The charge thereof unto a covetous spright
Commanded was, who thereby did attend,

And warily awaited day and night,
From other covetous fiends it to defend,
Who it to rob and ransack did intend.
Then Mammon, turning to that warrior, said:—
«Lo, here the worldès bliss! lo, here the end
To which all men do aim, rich to be made!
Such grace now to be happy is before thee laid.»

«Certes,» said he, «I n'ill thine off'red grace,
Ne to be made so happy do intend!
Another bliss before mine eyes I place,
Another happiness, another end.
To them that list, these base regards I lend;
But I in arms, and in achievements brave,
Do rather choose my fleeting hours to spend,
And to be lord of those that riches have,
Than them to have myself, and be their servile slave.»

Thereat the fiend his gnashing teeth did grate,
And grieved, so long to lack his greedy prey:
For well he weenèd that so glorious bait
Would tempt his guest to take thereof assay;
Had he so done, he had him snatch'd away
More light than culver in the falcon's fist:
Eternal God thee save from such decay!
But whenas Mammon saw his purpose miss'd,
Him to entrap unwares another way he wist.

Thence, forward he him led, and shortly brought
Unto another room, whose door forthright
To him did open as it had been taught;
Therein an hundred ranges weren pight,
And hundred furnaces all burning bright:
By every furnace many fiends did bide,—
Deformèd creatures, horrible in sight;
And every fiend his busy pains applied
To melt the golden metal, ready to be tried.

One with great bellows gather'd filling air,
And with forced wind the fuel did inflame;
Another did the dying brands repair
With iron tongs, and sprinkled of the same
With liquid waves, fierce Vulcan's rage to tame,
Who, mast'ring them, renew'd his former heat;
Some scumm'd the dross that from the metal came;

Some stirr'd the molten ore with ladles great;
And every one did swinck, and every one did sweat.

But when an earthly wight they present saw
Glist'ring in arms and battailous array,
From their hot work they did themselves withdraw
To wonder at the sight; for till that day,
They never creature saw that came that way:
Their staring eyes, sparkling with fervent fire
And ugly shapes, did nigh the Man dismay,
That, were it not for shame, he would retire;
Till that him thus bespake their sovereign lord and sire:—

«Behold, thou Faerys son, with mortal eye
That living eye before did never see!
The thing that thou didst crave so earnestly,
To weet whence all the wealth late show'd by me
Proceeded, lo! now is reveal'd to thee.
Here is the fountain of the worldès good!
Now therefore if thou wilt enrichèd be,
Avise thee well, and change thy willful mood;
Lest thou perhaps hereafter wish, and be withstood.»

«Suffice it then, thou money-god,» quoth he,
«That all thine idle offers I refuse.
All that I need I have: what needeth me
To covet more than I have cause to use?
With such vain shows thy worldlings vile abuse;
But give me leave to follow mine emprize.»
Mammon was much displeased, yet n'ote he choose
But bear the rigor of his bold mesprise:
And thence him forward led, him further to entice.

SIR GUYON AND THE PALMER VISIT AND DESTROY THE BOWER OF BLISS

From the ‹Faery Queene›

Thus being ent'red they behold around
A large and spacious plain on every side
Strowèd with pleasaunce; whose fair grassy ground
Mantled with green, and goodly beautified
With all the ornaments of Floras pride,

Wherewith her mother Art, as half in scorn
  Of niggard Nature, like a pompous bride
Did deck her, and too lavishly adorn,
When forth from virgin bow'r she comes in th' early morn.

Thereto the heavens always jovial
  Look'd on them lovely, still in steadfast state,
Ne suff'red storm nor frost on them to fall,
  Their tender buds or leaves to violate;
  Nor scorching heat, nor cold intemperate,
T' afflict the creatures which therein did dwell;
  But the mild air with season moderate
Gently attemp'red and disposed so well,
That still it breath'd forth sweet spirit and wholesome smell.

More sweet and wholesome than the pleasant hill
  Of Rhodope, on which the nymph that bore
A giant babe, herself for grief did kill;
  Or the Thessalian Tempe, where of yore
  Fair Daphne Phœbus's heart with love did gore;
Or Ida, where the gods loved to repair,
  Whenever they their heavenly bow'rs forlore;
Or sweet Parnasse, the haunt of Muses fair;
Or Eden self, if ought with Eden mote compare.

Much wond'red Guyon at the fair aspéct
  Of that sweet place, yet suff'red no delight
To sink into his sense, nor mind affect;
  But passèd forth, and look'd still forward right,
  Bridling his will and mastering his might:
Till that he came unto another gate;
  No gate, but like one, being goodly dight
With boughs and branches, which did broad dilate
Their clasping arms in wanton wreathings intricate.

So fashionèd a porch with rare device,
  Arch'd overhead with an embracing vine,
Whose bunches hanging down seem'd to entice
  All passers-by to taste their luscious wine,
  And did themselves into their hands incline,
As freely offering to be gatherèd;
  Some deep empurplèd as the hyacine,
Some as the ruby laughing sweetly red,
Some like fair emeralds, not yet well ripenèd.

And them amongst some were of burnish'd gold,
So made by art to beautify the rest,
Which did themselves amongst the leaves enfold,
As lurking from the view of covetous guest,
That the weak boughs with so rich load opprest
Did bow adown as overburdenèd.
Under that porch a comely dame did rest,
Clad in fair weeds but foul disorderèd,
And garments loose that seem'd unmeet for womanhead.

In her left hand a cup of gold she held,
And with her right the riper fruit did reach,
Whose sappy liquor, that with fullness swell'd,
Into her cup she scruzed with dainty breach
Of her fine fingers, without foul empeach,
That so fair wine-press made the wine more sweet:
Thereof she used to give to drink to each
Whom passing by she happenèd to meet;
It was her guise all strangers goodly so to greet.

So she to Guyon off'red it to taste,
Who, taking it out of her tender hond,
The cup to ground did violently cast,
That all in pieces it was broken fond,
And with the liquor stainèd all the lond:
Whereat Excess exceedingly was wroth,
Yet no'te the same amend, ne yet withstond,
But suffer'd him to pass, all were she loth:
Who, nought regarding her displeasure, forward go'th.

There the most dainty paradise on ground
Itself doth offer to his sober eye,
In which all pleasures plenteously abound,
And none does others happiness envy:
The painted flow'rs; the trees upshooting high;
The dales for shade; the hills for breathing space;
The trembling groves; the crystal running by;
And that which all fair works doth most aggrace—
The art which all that wrought—appearèd in no place.

One would have thought (so cunningly the rude
And scornèd parts were mingled with the fine)
That Nature had for wantonness ensued
Art, and that Art at Nature did repine;
So striving each th' other to undermine,

Each did the others work more beautify;
So diff'ring both in wills agreed in fine:
So all agreed, through sweet diversity,
This garden to adorn with all variety.

And in the midst of all a fountain stood,
Of richest substance that on earth might be,
So pure and shiny that the silver flood
Through every channel running one might see;
Most goodly it with curious imagery
Was over-wrought, and shapes of naked boys,
Of which some seem'd of lively jollity
To fly about, playing their wanton toys,
Whilst others did themselves embay in liquid joys.

And over all of purest gold was spread
A trail of ivy in his native hue;
For the rich metal was so colorèd,
That wight, who did not well avised it view,
Would surely deem it to be ivy true.
Low his lascivious arms adown did creep,
That themselves dipping in the silver dew
Their fleecy flow'rs they fearfully did steep,
Which drops of crystal seem'd for wantonness to weep.

Infinite streams continually did well
Out of this fountain, sweet and fair to see,
The which into an ample laver fell,
And shortly grew to so great quantity,
That like a little lake it seem'd to be;
Whose depth exceeded not three cubits height,
That through the waves one might the bottom see,
All paved beneath with jasper shining bright,
That seem'd the fountain in that sea did sail upright.

Eftsoones they heard a most melodious sound,
Of all that mote delight a dainty ear,
Such as at once might not on living ground,
Save in this paradise, be heard elsewhere:
Right hard it was for wight which did it hear,
To read what manner music that mote be;
For all that pleasing is to living ear
Was there consorted in one harmony:
Birds, voices, instruments, winds, waters, all agree;

The joyous birds shrouded in cheerful shade,
Their notes unto the voice attemp'red sweet;
Th' angelical soft trembling voices made
To th' instruments divine respondence meet;
The silver-sounding instruments did meet
With the base murmur of the waters' fall;
The waters' fall with difference discreet,
Now soft, now loud, unto the wind did call;
The gentle warbling wind low answerèd to all.

The whiles some one did chant this lovely lay:—
"Ah! see, whoso fair thing dost fain to see,
In springing flow'r the image of thy day!
Ah! see the virgin rose, how sweetly she
Doth first peep forth with bashful modesty;
That fairer seems the less ye see her may!
Lo! see soon after how more bold and free
Her barèd bosom she doth broad display;
Lo! see soon after how she fades and falls away!

"So passeth, in the passing of a day,
Of mortal life the leaf, the bud, the flow'r;
Ne more doth flourish after first decay,
That erst was sought to deck both bed and bow'r
Of many a lady and many a paramour.
Gather therefore the rose whilest yet is prime,
For soon comes age that will her pride deflow'r;
Gather the rose of love whilest yet is time,
Whilst loving thou mayst lovèd be with equal crime."

He ceased; and then 'gan all the quire of birds
Their diverse notes t'attune unto his lay,
As in approvance of his pleasing words.
The constant pair heard all that he did say,
Yet swervèd not, but kept their forward way
Through many covert groves and thickets close,
In which they creeping did at last display
That wanton lady, with her lover loose,
Whose sleepy head she in her lap did soft dispose. . . .

The noble elf and careful palmer drew
So nigh them, minding naught but lustful game,
That sudden forth they on them rush'd and threw
A subtle net, which only for that same
The skillful palmer formally did frame;

So held them under fast; the whiles the rest
Fled all away for fear of fouler shame.
The fair enchantress, so unwares opprest,
Tried all her arts and all her sleights thence out to wrest;

And eke her lover strove: but all in vain;
For that same net so cunningly was wound,
That neither guile nor force might it distrain.
They took them both, and both them strongly bound
In captive bands, which there they ready found:
But her in chains of adamant he tied,
For nothing else might keep her safe and sound;
But Verdant (so he hight) he soon untied,
And counsel sage instead thereof to him applied.

But all those pleasant bow'rs, and palace brave,
Guyon broke down with rigor pitiless;
Ne ought their goodly workmanship might save
Them from the tempest of his wrathfulness,
But that their bliss he turn'd to balefulness:
Their groves he fell'd; their gardens did deface;
Their arbors spoil; their cabinets suppress;
Their banquet-houses burn; their buildings raze;
And of the fairest late, now made the foulest place.

Then led they her away, and eke that knight
They with them led, both sorrowful and sad:
The way they came, the same return'd they right,
Till they arrivèd where they lately had
Charm'd those wild beasts that raged with fury mad;
Which, now awaking, fierce at them 'gan fly,
As in their mistress' rescue, whom they lad:
But them the palmer soon did pacify.
Then Guyon ask'd, what meant those beasts which there did lie?

Said he: « These seeming beasts are men indeed,
Whom this enchantress hath transformèd thus;
Whylome her lovers, which her lusts did feed,
Now turnèd into figures hideous,
According to their minds like monstruous.
Sad end,» quoth he, « of life intemperate,
And mournful meed of joys delicious!
But, palmer, if it mote thee so aggrate,
Let them returnèd be unto their former state.»

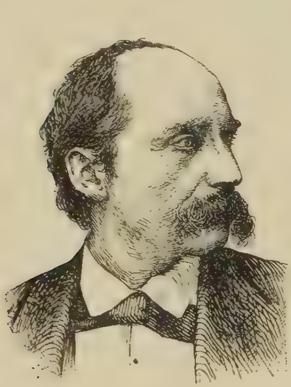
Straightway he with his virtuous staff them strook,
And straight of beasts they comely men became:
Yet being men, they did unmanly look
And starèd ghastly; some for inward shame,
And some for wrath to see their captive dame:
But one above the rest in special
That had an hog been late, hight Grylle by name,
Repinèd greatly, and did him miscall
That had from hoggish form him brought to natural.

Said Guyon: «See the mind of beastly man,
That hath so soon forgot the excellence
Of his creation, when he life began,
That now he chooseth with vile difference
To be a beast, and lack intelligence!»
To whom the palmer thus: «The dunghill kind
Delights in filth and foul incontinence:
Let Gryll be Gryll, and have his hoggish mind;
But let us hence depart whilest weather serves and wind.»

FRIEDRICH SPIELHAGEN

(1829–)

Works so widely different as Gutzkow's 'Knights of the Mind,' Freytag's 'Debit and Credit,' and Spielhagen's 'Problematic Natures,' all acknowledge in 'Wilhelm Meister' their common spiritual ancestor. 'Wilhelm Meister' is at once the finest blossom of German novelistic literature, and the seed-sack of its later yield. Romanticist and realist alike have found in this granary of thought some seed to plant in their own minds, and to develop in their own ways. It is far from being a model of form and composition, but it is an inexhaustible treasure-house of ideas; and to these subsequent writers of fiction have gone, choosing each that which best suited him, and transforming it into something new and fair, and withal his own. Structurally these later novelists have made a great advance over 'Wilhelm Meister.' As the complex George Eliot was the lineal descendant of the simple Madame de La Fayette, so Spielhagen, with his mastery of technique, is the descendant of Goethe, with his careless construction and often amorphous heaping-up of thoughts. 'Problematic Natures' is related to 'Wilhelm Meister' in this respect also, that it contains materials enough to furnish forth half a dozen average novels: it is notable for its exuberance of creative power.



Friedrich Spielhagen

Friedrich Spielhagen was born at Magdeburg on February 24th, 1829. His taste for philosophical and philological pursuits was gratified at Berlin, Bonn, and Greifswald; but gradually he came to find in pure literature his surest and at last exclusive stay. In the autobiography which he published in 1890, under the title of 'Finder und Erfinder' (Finders and Inventors), we have a detailed and voluminous account of Spielhagen's early years. His young literary predilections were fostered chiefly by chance: in his father's house there was no complete set of Goethe; only 'Hermann and Dorothea' and the first part of 'Faust.' Good fortune threw an old set of Lessing into his hands. Heine's 'Book of Songs' and Freiligrath's poems were likewise fortuitous favorites. But the rapid and strong growth of his literary genius he attributes above all to Homer, in whose works he saw nature transfigured. It was a weary and disheartening struggle with Spielhagen before he was able to make his love of poetry the central fact of his life. For him as for many another, the choice of a career raised obstinate questionings; and between his native impulses and torturing doubts of his own ability he for a long time wavered. His first novelistic ventures, ‹Clara Vere› (1857), and ‹Auf der Düne› (On the Dune: 1858), made no impression. It was not until 1860, with the publication of the first part of ‹Problematische Naturen› in four volumes, that his fame as a German novelist was established. A position as feuilletonist for a Hanoverian newspaper was offered to him; and he was under a contract to produce four volumes of fiction a year. He now shudders at the thought; but he did not then. Moreover, he had four volumes ready in his mind: these formed the second part of his famous work, to which against the author's judgment a different title was given,—‹Durch Nacht zum Licht› (Through Night to Light). With the completion of this book, Spielhagen was fairly launched upon the ocean of literature; and thenceforth he has been an indefatigable voyager on its many seas.

An attempt to give in brief space a notion of the wide range of interests and ideas covered by Spielhagen's many novels would be fruitless. His is essentially a bourgeois mind: with methodical facility he has produced works on most diverse themes. Writing easily and rapidly, he has made it a point never to let the printer's devil get at his heels. He has always taken life very seriously, though not lacking in humor, as his ‹Skeleton in the House› shows. His contemporaries sat to him for his characters, and events amid which he lived furnished him with materials. This resulted in some cases in giving too much emphasis to passing states of public feeling; in other cases the enthusiasm of the partisan disturbed that serene aloofness from the strife of opinions which is essential to the poetic creator. But Spielhagen has kept pace with the progress of things, and has in some respects outgrown himself. An eminent English critic has said of him, that he more than any other seems to have retained his youth. Those who love him as the author of ‹Problematic Natures› and ‹In Reih' und Glied› (In Rank and File) must be disappointed in his more recent work. Overproduction has indeed caused a deterioration in quality; and we miss in the latest books that fineness and firmness which distinguish ‹Quisisana› (1880). ‹Quisisana› is free from tendency, psychologically interesting, faithful, direct, and tender: it best exhibits Spielhagen's best qualities. It is a romance of the man of fifty: a type which Goethe introduced into German literature, as Balzac introduced the woman of thirty into French.

This hale and vigorous man of fifty is in love with his beautiful ward; but he heroically sacrifices his own happiness by marrying her to the young man whom she loves, while her lavish filial affection for himself only augments his own anguish. This simple tale is in its workmanship and feeling at once delicate and strong.

Spielhagen was only twenty-two years of age when he began to work upon his first great novel. After a weary trip from publisher to publisher, it appeared in Berlin eight years later. Young authors naturally identify themselves with their heroes; and in their early works seek to reveal their own microcosm. This book is in essence, though not in form, a novel of the first person. Its title is taken from a phrase of Goethe's: « There are some problematical natures who are unsuited to any situation in life, and whom no situation suits. Thus there arises a terrible conflict, in which life is consumed without enjoyment.» For a time Spielhagen believed himself to be such a nature: but as the novel advanced, confidence in himself grew; slowly he detached himself from his hero, and gained in objectivity. The title, which originally read ‹A Problematic Nature,› was changed to the plural. In it is depicted the strife between the anciently intrenched feudalism and the resistlessly advancing industrialism. The inner problem however is, to use the author's own words,—

> «to portray the life of a man, most richly endowed by nature, who, in spite of his struggle towards the good, is ruined because he does not know how to set bounds to himself; and makes the discovery too late that the most enthusiastic efforts to attain ideal ends are doomed to failure, and the striver himself to destruction, if he refuse to recognize the conditions of our earthly existence.»

In spite of the author's great productivity, and the wide popularity of many of his later novels, it is always ‹Problematic Natures› that one first recalls when Spielhagen's name is mentioned.

Of the dominant importance of this work in the author's life, he himself seems to be conscious. The circumstances, both inward and outward, under which it came to be written, are the leading theme of the autobiography. His theories of his craft in general are set forth in his ‹Technique of the Novel,› a companion-piece to Freytag's ‹Technique of the Drama.› Spielhagen also wrote several dramas, some of which attained a moderate success. He enriched the German reading public by translations from the French and English; several works of Michelet, Roscoe's ‹Lorenzo de' Medici,› and Emerson's ‹English Traits.› He was from his youth shy about publishing poems: his first collection appeared in 1893; in which many a poem reveals some soul experience in the poet's early life.

Spielhagen, however, is first of all the novelist. If his works display a "tendency," his democratic principles and philosophy show themselves in the development of the plot, and are never directly preached from the pages; his generalizations are under artistic restraint. «It is the business of novelists,» he says, «to give world pictures,—pictures of their nation and its aspirations during a certain period.» Thus each of Spielhagen's works has added a touch to his great picture of the age in which he lived; and the mass of his creations is a thoughtful and poetical portrayal of persons and events that have an actual counterpart in the private annals or public history of our time.

FROM ‹QUISISANA›

[Uncle Bertram, in the grief of his hopeless and unconfessed love, has sought relief in the excitement of political life; and a brilliant career is opening before him, when his health, undermined by his secret sorrow and feverish activity, gives way. On the morrow he is to make an important speech; his physician has warned him that it would be «undesirable.» In death he «recovers his health,» and this lends to the title of the novel a subtle moral significance: «Where one grows well again.»]

«THEN you insist upon joining in to-morrow's debate?» the doctor was saying.

«I flatter myself that it is necessary!» replied Bertram.

«As a political partisan I admit it; as your medical adviser I repeat, it is impossible.»

«Come, my good friend, you said just now it is undesirable; now from that to impossible is rather a bold step. We had better stick to the first statement.»

The doctor, who had taken up his hat and stick a few minutes before, laid both down again; pushed Bertram into the chair before his writing-table; sat down again facing him; and said:—

«Judging from your momentary condition, it is merely desirable that you should have at present absolute repose for at least a few days. But I very much fear that to-morrow's inevitable excitement will make you worse; and then the downright necessity for rest will arise, and that not only for a few days. Let me speak quite frankly, Bertram. I know that I shall not frighten you, although I should rather like to do so. You are causing me real anxiety. I greatly regret that I kept you last autumn from your projected Italian trip, and that I pushed and urged you into the fatigues of an election campaign, and into the harassing anxieties of parliamentary life. I assumed that this energetic activity would contribute to your complete restoration to health;

and I find that I made a grievous mistake. And yet I am not aware exactly where the mistake was made. You mastered your parliamentary duties with such perfect ease, you entered the arena so well prepared and armed from top to toe, you used your weapons with all the skill of a past master, and you were borne along by such an ample measure of success — and that of course has its great value. Well, according to all human understanding and experience, the splendid and relatively easy discharge of duties for which you are so eminently fitted should contribute to your well-being; and yet the very opposite is occurring. In spite of all my cogitations I can find but one theory to account for it. In spite of the admirable equanimity which you always preserve, in spite of the undimmed serenity of your disposition and appearance, by which you charm your friends whilst you frequently disarm your foes, there must be a hidden something in your soul that gnaws away at your vitals,— a deep, dark undercurrent of grief and pain. Am I right? You know that I am not asking the question from idle curiosity."

"I know it," replied Bertram; "and therefore I answer: you are right and yet not right, or right only if you hold me responsible for the effect of a cause I was guiltless of."

"You answer in enigmas, my friend."

"Let me try a metaphor. Say, somebody is compelled to live in a house in which the architect made some grave mistake at the laying of the foundations, or at some important period or other of its erection. The tenant is a quiet, steady man, who keeps the house in good order; then comes a storm, and the ill-constructed building is terribly shaken and strained. The steady-going tenant repairs the damage as best he can, and things go on fairly enough for a time, a long time; until there comes another and a worse storm, which makes the whole house topple together over his head."

The doctor's dark eyes had been dwelling searchingly and sympathizingly upon the speaker. Now he said: —

"I think I understand your metaphor. Of course it only meets a portion of the case. I happen to know the house in question extremely well. True, there was one weak point in it from the beginning, in spite of its general excellent construction, but — "

"But me no buts," interrupted Bertram eagerly. "Given the one weak point, and all the rest naturally follows. I surely need not point out to such a faithful disciple of Spinoza's, that thought and expansion are but attributes of one and the same substance;

that there is no physiological case that does not, rightly viewed, turn to a psychological one; that so excitable a heart as mine must needs be impressed by things more than other hearts whose bands do not snap, happen what may and notwithstanding all the storms of Fate. Or are you sure that if you had had to examine the heart of Werther, or of Eduard in the 'Elective Affinities,' you would not have found things undreamed-of by æsthetic philosophers? I belong to the same race. I neither glory in this nor do I blush for it; I simply state a fact,—a fact which embodies my fate, before whose power I bow, or rather whose power bows me down in spite of my resistance. For however much I may by disposition belong to the last century, yet I am also a citizen of our own time; nor can I be deaf to its bidding. I know full well that modern man can no longer live and die exclusively for his private joys and sorrows; I know full well that I have a fatherland whose fame, honor, and greatness I am bound to hold sacred, and to which I am indebted as long as a breath stirs within me. I know it; and I believe that I have proved it according to my strength, both formerly, and again now when—"

He covered forehead and eyes with his hands, and so sat for a while in deep emotion, which his medical friend respected by keeping perfectly silent. Then looking up again, Bertram went on in a hushed voice:—

"My friend, that last storm was very, very strong. It shook the feeble building to its very foundation. What is now causing your anxiety is indeed but a consequence of that awful tempest. The terribly entrancing details no one as yet knows except one woman, whom an almost identical fate made my confidante; and who will keep my secret absolutely. So would you, I know. You have been before this my counselor and my father-confessor. And so you will be another time, perhaps, if you desire it and deem it necessary. To-day only this one remark more, for your own satisfaction: I read in your grave countenance the same momentous question which my confidante put to me, Whether I am willing to recover? I answered to the best of my knowledge and belief, Yes! I consider it my duty to be willing. It is a duty simply towards my electors, who have not honored me with their votes that I may lay me down and die of an unhappy and unrequited attachment. If the latter does happen,—I mean my dying,—you will bear witness that it was done against my will, solely in consequence of that mistake in the original construction which the architect was guilty of. But in order that it may not happen, or may at least not happen so soon, you, my friend, must allow me to do the very thing which you have forbidden. The dream I dreamed was infinitely beautiful; and to speak quite frankly, real life seems barren and dreary in comparison with it. The contrast is too great; and I can only efface it somewhat by mixing with the insipid food a strong spice of excitement, such as our parliamentary kitchen is just now supplying in the best quality, and of which our head cook is sure to give us an extra dose to-morrow. And therefore I must be in my place at the table to-morrow and make my dinner speech. *Quod erat demonstrandum.*»

He held out his hand with a smile. His friend smiled too. It was a very melancholy smile, and vanished again forthwith.

«What a pity,» he said, «that the cleverest patients are the most intractable. But I have vowed I will never have a clever one again, after you.»

«In truth,» replied Bertram, «I am giving you far too much trouble. In your great kindness and friendship you come to me almost in the middle of the night, when you ought to be resting from your day's heavy toil; you come of your own accord, simply impelled by a faithful care for my well-being; and finally, you have to return with ingratitude and disobedience for your reward. Well, well, let us hope for better things; and let me have the pleasure of seeing you again to-morrow.»

Konski came in with a candle to show the doctor the way down; for the lights in the house had long since been extinguished. The gentlemen were once more shaking hands, and the physician slipped his on to Bertram's wrist. Then he shook his head.

«Konski,» he said, turning to the servant, «if your master has a fancy one of these days to drink a glass of champagne, you may give him one, as an exception; but only one.»

«Now remember that, Konski!» said Bertram.

«It is not likely that it will happen,» grumbled Konski.

«Konski will leave me to-morrow,» explained Bertram.

«Will, is it? No, I won't, but—»

«All right!» said his master: «we must not bother the doctor with our private affairs. Good-by, my friend! With your leave I will dine with you to-morrow.»

The physician left; Bertram immediately again sat down at the writing-table, and resumed the work which this late visit had interrupted. It was a disputed election case, and he would have to report upon it to the House. There had been some irregularities, and it was in the interest of his own party that the election should be declared null and void; he had been examining the somewhat complicated data with all the greater conscientiousness and care. But now he lost the thread, and was turning over the voluminous pages of the evidence, when lo! a daintily folded sheet of paper — a letter — fell out.

"Good heavens! how came this here?"

He seized upon it with eagerness, as a wandering beggar might seize upon a gold coin which he saw glittering among the dust on the road. The hot blood surged to the temples from the sick and sore heart; the hand that held the slight paper trembled violently.

"Now he would not be grumbling at my slow pulse!"

Yesterday morning he had received this letter, but had not succeeded in composing himself sufficiently to read more than a few lines. He had thought that perhaps on his return from the Reichstag he might be in a more settled frame of mind. Then he had not been able to find again the letter which had been laid aside, although he had searched for hours, — first alone, then with Konski.

And now — after all those documents were pushed aside — he was again, as yesterday, staring hard at the page; and again, as yesterday, the different lines ran into each other: but he shook his head angrily, drew his hand over his eyes, and then read: —

CAPRI, April 24th.

Dearest Uncle Bertram:

If to-day for the first time in our travels I write to you, take this as a gentle punishment for not having come to our wedding. Take it — no, I must not tell you a falsehood, not even in jest. We — I mean Kurt and myself — regretted your absence greatly; but were angry only with those wretched politics, which would not release you just at a time when, as Kurt explained to me, such important matters were at stake. Take then, I pray you, my prolonged silence as a proof of the confusion under which I labor amidst the thousand new impressions of travel, and through the hurry with which we have traveled. Kurt has just four weeks' leave, so we had indeed to make haste: and therefore we steamed direct from Genoa to Naples, calling at Leghorn only; and yesterday evening we arrived there, only to leave this morning and to sail to Capri, favored by a lively *tramontane.*

I am writing this my first letter upon the balcony of a house in Capri.

Dearest Uncle Bertram, do you know such a house, which «stands amidst orange groves, with sublimest view of the blue infinity of the ocean,— a fair white hostelry embowered in roses»?

The words are your own; and do you know when you spoke them to me? On that first night when I met you in the forest on the Hirschstein hill. You have probably forgotten it, but I remember it well; and all through the journey your words were ever before me: and of all the glories of Italy, I wanted first to see the house which had since then remained in your fond remembrance, where you «ever since longed to be back again,» and the very name of which was always to you «a sound of comfort, of promise: *Qui si sana!*»

And now we are here — we who need no comfort, we to whom all promise of earthly bliss has been fulfilled; and so drink in the blue air of heaven, and inhale the sweet fragrance of roses and oranges.

And you, dearest Uncle Bertram, you dwell — your heart full of longing for fair Quisisana — yonder in the dull gray North, buried beneath parliamentary papers, wearied and worn: and, uncle, that thought is the one gray cloud, the only one in the wide blue vault of heaven; like the one floating yonder above the rugged rocky front of Monte Solaro, of which our young landlord, Federigo, foretells that it will bring us a *burrasca*. I gave him a good scolding, and told him I wanted sunshine, plenty of sunshine, and nothing but sunshine; but I thought of you only, and not of us. And surely for you too, who are so noble and good, the sun does shine, and you walk in its light, in the sunny light of great fame! Yes, Uncle Bertram, however modest you are, you must yet be glad and proud to learn how your greatness is recognized and admired. I am not speaking of your friends, for that is a matter of course; but of your political opponents. In Genoa, at the table d'hôte, we made the acquaintance of some count from Pomerania,— I have forgotten his name,— with whom Kurt talked politics a good deal. In the evening the count brought us a Berlin paper, which contained your last great speech. «Look here,» he said: «there is a man from whom all can learn,— one of whom each party should be proud.» He had no idea why Kurt looked so pleased and proud, nor why I burst into tears when I read your splendid speech.

Only fancy, Uncle Bertram! Signor Federigo has just brought me, at my request, an old visitors' book — the one for the year 1859, the year in which I knew you had been here. Many leaves had been torn out, but the one upon which you had written your name was preserved; and the date turns out to be that of the very day on which I was born! Is not this passing strange? Signor Federigo has of course had to present the precious leaf to me; which he did with a most graceful bow,—the paper in one hand and the other laid upon his heart,—and we have resolved to celebrate here the day of your arrival in Capri and of my arrival in the world. Why indeed should we travel so swiftly? There can be no fairer scene than this anywhere. Sunshine, the fragrance of roses, the bright blue sky, the everlasting sea, my Kurt,—and the recollection of you, whose dear image every rock, every palm-tree, everything I see, brings as if by magic before my inner eye! No, no: we surely will stay here until my birthday.

Signor Federigo is calling from the veranda that «Madama» has only five minutes more for writing if the letter is to leave to-day. Of course it is to leave to-day; but I have the terrible conviction of having written nothing so far. It cannot now be helped. So next time I will tell you everything that I could not do to-day: about my parents, who are writing letters full of happiness—papa in particular, who seems delighted that he has given up his factories, which surprised me greatly; about Agatha's engagement to Herr von Busche,—which did not surprise me, for I saw it coming during the merrymakings previous to my wedding; about—

Signor Federigo, you are intolerable!

Dear Kurt, I cannot let you have the remaining space of two lines, for I absolutely require it myself to send my beloved Uncle Bertram a most hearty greeting and kiss from Quisisana.

Bertram laid the paper very gently down upon the table; he was stooping to imprint a kiss upon it, but before his lips touched the letter he drew himself up abruptly.

«No: she knows not what she does, but you know it, and she is your neighbor's wife! Shame upon you! Pluck it out,—the eye that offends you, and the base criminal heart as well!»

He seized the parliamentary papers, then paused.

«Until her birthday! Well, she will assuredly expect a few kind words, and has a right to expect them; nay, more, she would interpret my silence wrongly. I wonder whether there is yet time? When is her birthday? She has not mentioned the date: I think somewhere in the beginning of May. Now, on what day did I arrive there?»

He had not long to seek in the old diaries, which he kept methodically and preserved with care. There was the entry:—«May 1st. Arrived in Capri, and put up at a house which I found it hard to climb up to; the name had an irresistible attraction for me: Quisisana—*Sit omen in nomine!*»

"The first of May! Why, to-morrow is the first. It is too late for a letter, of course; but a telegram will do, if dispatched at once. Konski!"

The faithful servant entered.

"My good Konski, I am very sorry, but you must be off to the telegraph office at once. To-morrow is the birthday of Miss Erna; — well, well, you know! Of course she must hear from me."

He had written a few lines in German; then it occurred to him that it might be safer to write them in Italian. So he re-wrote them.

Konski, who had meanwhile got himself ready, entered the room.

"You will scarcely be back before midnight. And Konski, we must begin the morrow cheerfully. So put the key of the cellar into your pocket, and bring a bottle of champagne with you when you return. No remonstrance, otherwise I shall put into your 'character' to-morrow, 'Dismissed for disobedience'!" . . .

It was nearly three o'clock when the doctor came hurrying in. Konski would not leave the master, and had dispatched the porter. Konski took the doctor's hat and stick, and pointed in silence — he could not speak — to the big couch at the bottom of the room. The doctor took the lamp to the writing-table, and held it to the pale face. Konski followed and relieved him of the lamp, whilst the doctor made his investigation.

"He must have been dead an hour or more," he said, looking up. "Why did you not send sooner? Put the lamp back on the writing-table, and tell me all you know."

He had sat down in Bertram's chair. "Take a chair," he went on, "and tell me all."

Then Konski told.

He had come back at a quarter past twelve from the telegraph office; and had found his master writing away busily when he brought in the bottle of champagne which he had been ordered to fetch from the cellar. His master had scolded him for bringing only one glass, and made him fetch another; for they must both drink and clink glasses to the health of the young lady.

"Then," the servant went on, "I sat opposite to him, for the first time in my life, in that corner, at the small round table; he in the one chair and I in the other. And he chatted with me, not like a master with his servant, no: exactly — well, I cannot describe it, sir; but you know how good and kind he always was. I never heard an unkind word from him all these ten years I have been with him; and if ever he was a bit angry, he always made up for it afterwards. And to-morrow I was to leave for Rinstedt to get married; and he had given us our furniture and all, and fitted up a new shop for us into the bargain. Then we talked a good deal of Rinstedt, and of the manœuvres last year, and of Miss Erna that was, and of Italy,— where, as you know, sir, I was with the master two years ago. Well, I mean, it was not I who was talking so much, but master; and I could have gone on listening, listening forever, when he was telling of Capri, where we did not get that time, and where Mrs. Ringberg is staying now — Miss Erna as was. And then his eyes shone and sparkled splendidly; but he hardly drank any wine,— just enough to pledge the young lady's health with, and the rest is in his glass still. But he made me fill up mine again and again, for I could stand it, said he, and he could not, he said, and he would presently finish his work; and there are the papers on the table in front of you, sir, that he had been looking at. And then, of a sudden like, he says, 'Konski, I am getting tired: I shall lie down for half an hour. You just finish the bottle meanwhile, and call me at half past one sharp.' It was just striking one o'clock then.

« So he lay down, and I put the rug over him, sir; and oh — I'll never forgive myself for it; but all day long I had been running backward and forward about these things of mine, and then at last the long walk at night to the telegraph office, and perhaps the champagne had gone to my head a bit, since I am sure that I had not sat for five minutes before I was asleep. And when I woke it was not half past one but half past two; so that I was regular frightened like. But as the master was a-sleeping calm and steady, I thought, even as I was standing quite close to him, that it was a pity to wake him, even though he was lying on his left side again; which formerly he could not bear at all, and which you, sir, had forbidden so particularly. I mind of our first meeting in Rinstedt, sir, but then he did wake up again; — and now he is dead. »

Konski was crying bitterly. The doctor held out his hand to him.

« It is no fault of yours. Neither you nor I could have kept him alive. Now leave me here alone; you may wait in the next room. »

After Konski had left, the doctor went to the little round table on which the empty bottle and two glasses were standing, — one empty, one half full. Above the sofa, to the right and left, were gas brackets, with one lighted jet on either side. He held the half-full glass to the light and shook it. Bright beads were rising from the clear liquid.

He put the glass down again, and murmured: —

"He never spoke an untruth! It was in any case solely a question of time. He drank his death draught six months ago. The only wonder is that he bore it so long."

Erna's letter was lying on the table. The doctor read it almost mechanically.

"Pretty much as I thought!" he muttered. "Such a clever, and as it would seem, large-hearted girl; and yet — but they are all alike!"

A scrap of paper, with something in Bertram's handwriting, caught his eye. It was the German telegram.

"All hail — happiness and blessing — to-day and forever for my darling child in Quisisana."

The doctor rose, and was now pacing up and down the chamber with folded arms. From the adjoining room, the door of which was left ajar, he heard suppressed sobs. The faithful servant's unconcealed grief had well-nigh unchained the bitter sorrow in his own heart. He brushed the tears from his eyes, stepped to the couch, and drew the covering back.

He stood there long, lost in marveling contemplation.

The beautiful lofty brow, overshadowed by the soft and abundant hair, the dark color of which was not broken by one silvery thread; the daintily curved lips, that seemed about to open for some witty saying,— lips the pallor of which was put to shame by the whiteness of the teeth, which were just visible; the broad-arched chest,— what wonder that the man of fifty had felt in life like a youth! — like the youth for whom Death had taken him.

From those pure and pallid features Death had wiped away even the faintest remembrance of the woe which had broken the noble heart.

Now it was still — still for evermore!

He laid his hand upon that silent heart.

"*Qui si sana!*" he said, very gently.

Translated by H. E. Goldschmidt.

SPINOZA.

BENEDICT SPINOZA

(1632–1677)

BY JOSIAH ROYCE

In a Jewish family of Spanish origin dwelling at Amsterdam, was born in the year 1632, Baruch (in later years known as Benedict) Spinoza. The family were refugees, who had come to Holland directly from Portugal to escape persecution. The Jewish community to which Spinoza's people belonged numbered several hundred,— all wanderers, for similar reasons, from the Spanish peninsula. These people enjoyed a very full liberty as to their own religious and national affairs, and some of them were wealthy. Spinoza's parents however were of moderate means; but the boy received a good training in a Jewish school under the Rabbi Morteira, head of the synagogue. Later he read not only much Talmudic literature, but something of the mediæval Jewish philosophers. He also learned the trade of polishing lenses,— an art by which, after his exile from the Jewish community, he earned his living.

But influences of a very different sort from those of his boyhood were to determine his maturer life. Independent thinking, no doubt, began in his mind even before he had nearly finished his early studies in Jewish literature; but this very trend towards independence soon found expression in an interest in life and thought far removed from those of the orthodox Jewish community. He made a comparatively close friendship with an Anabaptist, Jarigh Jelles; and from this intercourse he acquired both a deep respect for Christianity and a very free interpretation of its spirit. He studied Latin, as well as several modern European languages. In consequence he was soon able to have a wide acquaintance with contemporary thinking. He read a good deal of physical science. As recent scholarship has come to recognize, he also became fairly well versed in the genuine scholastic philosophy, as it was taught in the text-books then most current. And finally, he carefully studied the philosophical system of Descartes, then at the height of its influence. The trains of thought thus determined were from the first various, and not altogether harmonious; and it is doubtful whether Spinoza was ever a disciple either of the system of Descartes, or of any other one doctrine, before he reached his own final views. But at all events Spinoza thus became, even as a young man, a thinker as resolute as he was calm, and as little disposed to remain in the orthodoxy of his childhood as he was to become an agitator against the faith of others. Although free from hypocrisy, he was never disposed to disturb the little ones; and he was as discreet as he was sincere. Yet fortune forced him to assume ere long, and openly, the heretic's position. Youthful companions, formerly schoolmates of Spinoza, deliberately drew out of him in confidence some of his opinions, denounced him, and thus brought him to trial before the synagogue court. Refusing to recant, he was expelled from the synagogue, under circumstances involving much agitation in the Jewish community; even an attempt was made by an excited Jew upon Spinoza's life.

For Spinoza, excommunication meant a freedom not at all undesirable, and a sort of loneliness in no wise intolerable. Fond as he always remained of the literary and scientific friendship of wiser men, humane and kindly as he throughout appears in all his relations with the common folk, Spinoza was of a profoundly independent disposition. No trace of romance can be found in the authentic records of his career. He called no man master. He willingly accepted favors from no one; and he craved only intellectual sympathy, and that only where he respected, in a thoroughgoing way, the person who was the source of this sympathy. A shrewd critic of human weaknesses, a great foe of illusions, and especially of every form of passionate illusion, Spinoza lived amongst men for the sake of whatever is rational in meaning and universal in character in the world of human intercourse. Exclusive affection, overmastering love, he felt and cultivated only towards God, viewed as he came to view God. Individual men were worthy, in his eyes, only in so far as they lived and taught the life of reason. Social ambitions our philosopher never shared. Worldly success he viewed with a gentle indifference. A somewhat proud nature,—cool, kindly, moderately ascetic, prudent; easily contented as to material goods, patiently strenuous only in the pursuit of the truth; sure of itself, indifferent to the misunderstandings, and even to the hatred, of others; fond of manifold learning, yet very carefully selective of the topics and details that were to be viewed as worth knowing; unaggressive but obstinate, rationalistic but with a strong coloring of mystical love for eternal things,—such is the personality that we find revealed in Spinoza's correspondence as well as in his writings. He was a good citizen, but an unconventional thinker. His comprehension of human nature, while it was far wider, by virtue of his native keenness of insight, than his somewhat narrow experience of life would seem easily to explain, was still limited by reason of his own well-defined and comparatively simple private character. He has no comprehension of the romantic side of life, and sees in human passions only the expression of confused and inadequate ideas as to what each individual imagines to be advantageous or disadvantageous to the welfare of his own organism. On the other hand, whenever Spinoza speaks of the world of absolute truth, he reveals a genuine warmth of religious experience, which, as already indicated, often allies him to the mystics. In brief, he is in spirit a Stoic, tinged with something of the ardor of the mediæval saint, but also tempered by the cautious reasonableness of a learned and free-thinking Jew. In consequence of these various motives that determine his thought, it is easy at times to view him as a somewhat cynical critic of life; and even as if he were one who prudently veiled an extremely radical, almost materialistic doctrine, under formulas whose traditional terms, such as God, Mind, Eternity, and the like, only hinted, through symbols, their meaning. Yet such a view is not only one-sided, but false. Equally easy, and less mistaken, it is to view Spinoza, on the basis of other parts of his work, as the «God-intoxicated» man whom a well-known tradition of the German Romantic school declared him to be. Yet this too is a one-sided view. Spinoza's doctrine, so far as it expresses his own temperament, is a product of three factors: (1) His idea of God, whose historical origin lies in the tradition common to all mysticism; (2) his ingenious interpretation of certain empirical facts about the relation of body and mind,—an interpretation which modified the former views of the Occasionalists; and (3) his shrewd Jewish commonsense, in terms of which, although again not without much use of the work of his predecessors, he estimated the strength and the weakness, the passions and the powers, of our common human nature.

Enough has been already said to indicate that Spinoza's fundamental personal interest in philosophy lay rather more in its bearing upon life than in its value as a pure theory. Yet Spinoza, for good reasons, is best known by his metaphysical theories; and has influenced subsequent thinking rather by his doctrine regarding Reality than by his advice as to the conduct of life. The reason for this fact is easy to grasp. Stoics and mystics all advise some more or less ascetic form of retirement from the world. The advice is often inspiring, but the deepest problem of life for mankind at large is how to live *in* the world. Moreover, the Stoics and the mystics have all alike certain beautiful but somewhat colorless and unvarying tales to tell—tales either of resignation, or of passionless insight, or of rapt devotion. Hence originality is possible in these types of doctrine only as regards the form, the illustration, or the persuasiveness of exposition, of a teaching that in substance is as old as the Hindoo Upanishads. In so far as Spinoza belongs to this very general and ancient genus of thinkers, he deeply moves his special disciples; but has less distinctive meaning for the world, since many others would so far do as well to represent the gospel of the peace that passeth understanding. On the other hand, what is historically distinctive about Spinoza as a thinker is not the prime motive which inspired him,— namely a determination to be at peace with life,— but the theoretical conception of the universe in terms of which he justified his teaching. Hence while Spinoza the man, the practical philosopher, the mystic, profoundly attracts, it is Spinoza the thinker whose theories have been of most importance for later literature. As for that central interest in the conduct of life, its importance for Spinoza appears in the titles of several of his books. He wrote an unfinished essay 'On the Improvement of the Intellect'; a 'Theologico-Political Tractate' (the only confessedly original and independent philosophical treatise that he published during his life,— a book inspired by a distinctly practical and social aim); an essay 'De Monarchia'; a little work long lost, and only recently known through a Dutch translation,— on 'God, Man, and Man's Happiness'; and in addition to these he wrote his great systematic philosophical exposition, his principal production, under the title 'Ethics.' These titles suggest a writer whose main purposes are purely practical. Yet the contents of all these books involve elaborately wrought theories. This gospel of Stoic or of mystic type must receive a demonstrative defense. The defense involves, however, both fundamental and supplementary theories regarding God, Matter, Mind, and Knowledge. It is to these theories that Spinoza's influence upon the history of thought is due; and this influence extends to men and to doctrines very remote from Spinoza's own ethical and religious interests. During his life he also published an exposition of the Cartesian philosophy, and this book is indeed a confessed contribution to theoretical thought.

To return for a moment from the man's character and influence to the story of his life,— there is indeed here little more to tell. Spinoza removed from Amsterdam to escape persecution; lived first in the country near by, then near Leyden, and later (1663) passed to the vicinity of The Hague. In 1670 he again moved into The Hague itself, and remained there until his death. In 1673 he received a call from the Elector Palatine to a professorship of philosophy at the University of Heidelberg, with a guarantee, very liberal in view of that age, as to his freedom of teaching. Spinoza carefully considered this flattering proposal; and then, with characteristic prudence and unworldliness, declined it. Meanwhile he had become a man of prominence. He corresponded with numerous friends, some of them persons of great note. His published 'Principles of Cartesian Philosophy' were in many hands; his 'Theologico-Political Tractate,' which appeared in 1670, aroused a storm of opposition, by reason of its rationalistic criticism of Scripture, and because of its admirable defense of the freedom of thought and of speech; and his posthumously published ‹Ethics› had already become known in manuscript to his more confidential friends, either as a whole or in part. In one or two instances only is Spinoza known to have shown an interest in the political events of that decidedly eventful time. In the slander and personal abuse to which malevolent critics often exposed his name he showed almost as little concern.

His health was throughout these years never very bad; but also, apparently, never robust. Without any previous warning by illness, so far as known to the family in whose house he lived, he died quite suddenly, February 21st, 1677. His ‹Ethics› first received publication in his ‹Posthumous Works› in the same year.

The philosophical doctrine of Spinoza belongs to the general class of what are called monistic theories of the universe. It is more or less dimly known to common-sense that the universe in which we live has some sort of deep unity about it. Everything is related, in some fashion or other, to everything else. For, not to begin with any closer ties, all material objects appear as in one space; all events take place in one time; and then if we look closer, we find far-reaching laws of nature, which, in surprising ways, bring to our knowledge how both things and events may be dependent in numerous ways upon facts that, as at first viewed, seem indefinitely remote from them. It is this apparent unity of natural things, obscurely recognized even in many superstitions of savage tribes, which, as it becomes more clearly evident, gives rise to the belief that one God created the world, and now rules all that is therein. But to refer every fact in the world to the will of the one Creator still leaves unexplained the precise relation of this God to his world. If he is one and the world is another, there remains a certain puzzling duality about one's view of things,— a duality that in the history of thought has repeatedly given place, in certain minds, to a doctrine that all reality is one, and that all diversity — or that in particular the duality of God and the world — is something either secondary, or subordinate, or unreal. The resulting monism has numerous forms. Sometimes it has appeared as a pure materialism, which knows no reality except that of the physical world, and which then reduces all this reality to some single type. In forms that are historically more potent, monism has appeared when it has undertaken to be what is called pantheistic. In this case monism regards the one Reality, not as the barely apparent physical world of visible or tangible matter, but as some deeper power, principle, substance, or mind, which in such doctrines is viewed as impersonal, and usually as unconscious, although its dignity or its spirituality is supposed to be such that one can call it Divine. One then views God and the world as forming together, or as lapsing into, the one ultimate Being. Of this Being one calls the physical universe a «show,» or a «manifestation,» or a more or less «illusory» hint, or perhaps an «emanation.» Of such pantheistic doctrines the Vedānta philosophy of the Hindoos is the classic representative; and very possibly, in large part, the ultimate historical source. In Greek philosophy the Eleatic school, and later the Stoics, and in one sense the Neo-Platonic doctrines, were representatives of pantheism. In unorthodox mediæval philosophy pantheism is well represented. It was not without its marked and important influence upon the formulation of even the orthodox scholastic philosophy. And as was remarked above, Spinoza drew some of the weapons which he wielded from the armory of orthodox scholasticism itself.

Spinoza's doctrine is the classical representative of pure pantheism in modern philosophy. God and the world are, for Spinoza, absolutely one. There is in reality nothing but God,—the Substance, the Unity with an infinity of attributes, the source whence all springs; but also the home wherein all things dwell, the «productive» or «generating» Nature, in whose bosom all the produced or generated nature that we know or that can exist, lives and moves and has its being. For all that is produced, or that appears, is only the expression, the incorporation, the manifestation, of the one Substance; and has no separate being apart from this Substance itself. Moreover, all that is produced *necessarily* results from the nature of the one Substance. There is no contingency or free-will in the world.

So far Spinoza's doctrine, as thus stated, occupies on the whole the ground common to all pantheism. The special interest of this doctrine lies however in three features: first, in Spinoza's method of giving a proof for his doctrine; secondly, in his devices for explaining the seeming varieties that appear in our known world; and thirdly, in the application and use that he makes of his theory when once it has been expounded. The first of these topics concerns the student of philosophy rather than any one else, and must here be left out of account. Suffice it to say only that Spinoza, in his 'Ethics,' imitates the traditional form of Euclid's geometrical treatise,—starts with definitions, axioms, and the like, and proposes to give a rigid demonstration of every step of his argument; while as a fact, what he accomplishes is a very brilliant and skillful analysis, one-sided but instructive, of certain traditional (and largely scholastic) ideas about the ultimate nature of real Being. He naturally convinces no one who does not start with just his chosen group of traditional notions, emphasized in precisely his own fashion,—which differed, we need hardly say, from the old scholastic fashion. Yet his study is profoundly instructive; and is lighted up by numerous passing remarks, comments, and criticisms, of no small interest.

Grant however for the moment the central thesis of Spinoza's pantheism: suppose him to have proved that one Substance, called God, not only produces, but *is* all things: and then comes the question, always critical for any monistic view of the world, How can we apply this ultimate conception to explain the diversities of things as we see them? Above all, how reconcile with the mysterious unity of the Divine Substance the largest and most important diversity of the world as known to us men,—namely, the contrast between matter and mind? How can matter and mind be, and be so diverse as they seem, and yet manifest equally the nature of the one Real Being, God? and what are the true relations of matter and mind?

Spinoza's answer to this question has been of great historical importance. It has influenced much of the most recent speculation, and has played a part in the most modern discussions of psychology, of evolution, and in some cases of general physical science. Spinoza here asserted that the one Substance, being essentially and in all respects infinite, has to reveal the wealth of its nature in infinitely numerous attributes, or fundamental fashions of showing what it is and what it can express. Each of these attributes embodies, in its own independent way, and "after its own kind," the true nature of the Substance, and the whole true nature thereof, precisely in so far as the nature of each attribute permits. Of these infinitely numerous attributes, two are known to man. They are extension, or the attribute expressed in the whole world of material facts, and thought, or the attribute expressed in the whole world of mental facts. Each of these attributes of the Substance reveals in its own way, or after its own kind, and quite independently of the other attribute, the whole nature of the Substance. Each is infinite after its own kind, just as the Substance, which possesses the entire Reality and expresses itself in the attributes, is absolutely infinite. In other words, to adopt Taine's famous comparison, matter and mind are like two expressions, in two precisely parallel texts, of the same ultimate meaning; or together they form, as it were, a bilingual book, with text and interlinear translation. They are precisely parallel; but as to the succession of the single words in each, they are mutually independent. Each in its own way tells the whole truth as to what the Substance is, in so far as the Substance can be viewed now under this and now under that aspect,—*i. e.*, now as Substance extended, and now as Substance thinking. Each attribute is text, each translation, yet neither interferes with the other. Accordingly, wherever there is matter there is mind, and *vice versa*. That this last fact escapes us ordinarily is due to the limitation of our natures. Our minds are part of the Divine Thought, just as our bodies are part of the Divine Extension. But we know directly only so much of mind as corresponds to our own bodily processes, viewed in their linkage and in their unity. Hence other bodies seem to us inanimate. As a fact, matter and mind are parallel and coextensive throughout the universe. On the other hand, although perfectly correspondent, inseparable, and parallel (for each is in its own way an expression of precisely the same Divine truth which the other expresses), matter and mind, close companions as they are, never causally affect each other; but each is determined solely by its own inner laws. Ideas cause ideas; bodies move bodies: but bodies never produce mental states, nor do thoughts issue in physical movements, even in case of our own bodies and minds. The appearance which makes this seem true, when our mind and bodies appear to interact, is due to the principle that «The order and connection of ideas is the same as the order and connection of things,» owing precisely to the parallelism of the attributes. Hence just when a given physical state takes place in our bodies, the parallel idea, by virtue of the laws of mind, is sure to arise in our consciousness.

This theory of the independence and parallelism of mind and body has played, as we have said, a great part in more recent discussion; and survives, as the doctrine of the «psycho-physical parallelism,» in modern scientific discussions which are far removed in many respects from Spinoza's metaphysics.

The practical consequences of the system of Spinoza are worked out by the author in the later divisions of his ‘Ethics,’ in a manner which has become classic; although, as pointed out above, Spinoza's distinctive historical influence is due rather to his general theories. But as one way of telling the ancient tale of the wise man's life in God, the practical interpretation which Spinoza gives to monism may well stand beside the other classics of Stoical and of mystical lore. Since there is naught but God, and since in God there is fulfilled, in an impersonal but none the less perfect way, all that our thought aims to know, and all that even our blind passions mistakenly strive to attain, the wise man, according to Spinoza, enjoys an absolute «acquiescence» in whatever the infinite wisdom produces. God is absolute, and can lack nothing; hence apparent evil is a merely negative «deprivation» of good, a deprivation itself due only to our inadequate view,—*i. e.*, only to error. Evil is, then, nothing positive. And the wise man, seeing all things in God, loves God with a love that is identical with God's love of his own perfection. For God, if not conscious in our fleeting way, has still the fulfillment of all that consciousness means, in the very perfection of his thinking attribute; so that our thoughts are God's very thoughts precisely in so far as our thoughts are rational, complete, adequate, true. In other words, in so far as we are wise, we directly enter into the perfection of God himself.

Since thoughts of a very similar type have received a frequent expression in writings reputed orthodox, it is not surprising that many who easily fear the name pantheism have still been ready to reverence, in Spinoza, the spirit, profound if inadequate, which in such fashion embodies, in our philosopher's work, one of the most universal motives of piety.

Josiah Royce.

THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE UNDERSTANDING

After experience had taught me that all the usual surroundings of social life are vain and futile,—seeing that none of the objects of my fears contained in themselves anything either good or bad, except in so far as the mind is affected by them,—I finally resolved to inquire whether there might be some real good having power to communicate itself, which would affect the mind singly, to the exclusion of all else; whether, in fact, there might be anything of which the discovery and attainment would enable me to enjoy continuous, supreme, and unending happiness. I say "I *finally* resolved"; for at first sight it seemed unwise willingly to lose hold on what was sure for the sake of something then uncertain. I could see the benefits which are acquired through fame and riches, and that I should be obliged to abandon the quest of such objects if I seriously devoted myself to the search for something different and new. I perceived that if true happiness chanced to be placed in the former, I should necessarily miss it; while if, on the other hand, it were not so placed, and I gave them my whole attention, I should equally fail.

I therefore debated whether it would not be possible to arrive at the new principle, or at any rate at a certainty concerning its existence, without changing the conduct and usual plan of my life; with this end in view I made many efforts, but in vain. For the ordinary surroundings of life which are esteemed by men (as their actions testify) to be the highest good, may be classed under the three heads — Riches, Fame, and the Pleasures of Sense: with these three the mind is so absorbed that it has little power to reflect on any different good. By sensual pleasure the mind is enthralled to the extent of quiescence, as if the supreme good were actually attained, so that it is quite incapable of thinking of any other object: when such pleasure has been gratified it is followed by extreme melancholy, whereby the mind, though not enthralled, is disturbed and dulled.

The pursuit of honors and riches is likewise very absorbing, especially if such objects be sought simply for their own sake, inasmuch as they are then supposed to constitute the highest good. In the case of fame the mind is still more absorbed; for fame is conceived as always good for its own sake, and as the ultimate end to which all actions are directed. Further, the attainment of riches and fame is not followed, as in the case of sensual pleasures, by repentance: but the more we acquire the greater is our delight, and consequently the more are we incited to increase both the one and the other; on the other hand, if our hopes happen to be frustrated, we are plunged into the deepest sadness. Fame has the further drawback that it compels its votaries to order their lives according to the opinions of their fellow-men; shunning what they usually shun, and seeking what they usually seek.

When I saw that all these ordinary objects of desire would be obstacles in the way of a search for something different and new, — nay, that they were so opposed thereto, that either they or it would have to be abandoned, — I was forced to inquire which would prove the most useful to me; for as I say, I seemed to be willingly losing hold on a sure good for the sake of something uncertain. However, after I had reflected on the matter, I came in the first place to the conclusion that by abandoning the ordinary objects of pursuit, and betaking myself to a new quest, I should be leaving a good, uncertain by reason of its own nature, — as may be gathered from what has been said, — for the sake of a good not uncertain (for I sought for a fixed good) save only in the possibility of its attainment.

Further reflection convinced me that if I could really get to the root of the matter, I should be leaving certain evils for a certain good. I thus perceived that I was in a state of great peril, and I compelled myself to seek with all my strength for a remedy, however uncertain it might be; as a sick man struggling with a deadly disease, when he sees that death will surely be upon him unless a remedy be found, is compelled to seek such a remedy with all his strength, inasmuch as his whole hope lies therein. All the objects pursued by the multitude not only bring no remedy that tends to preserve our being, but even act as hindrances; causing the death not seldom of those who possess them, and always of those who are possessed by them. There are many examples of men who have suffered persecution even to death for the sake of their riches, and of men who in pursuit of wealth have exposed themselves to so many dangers that they have paid away their life as a penalty for their folly. Examples are no less numerous of men who have endured the utmost wretchedness for the sake of gaining or preserving their reputation. Lastly, there are innumerable cases of men who have hastened their death through over-indulgence in sensual pleasure. All these evils seem to have arisen from the fact that happiness or unhappiness is made wholly to depend on the quality of the object which we love. When a thing is not loved, no quarrels will arise concerning it, no sadness will be felt if it perishes, no envy if it is possessed by another, no fear, no hatred, —in short, no disturbances of the mind. All these arise from the love of what is perishable, such as the objects already mentioned. But love towards a thing eternal and infinite feeds the mind wholly with joy, and is itself unmingled with any sadness; wherefore it is greatly to be desired, and sought for with all our strength. Yet it was not at random that I used the words, "If I could go to the root of the matter;" for though what I have urged was perfectly clear to my mind, I could not forthwith lay aside all love of riches, sensual enjoyment, and fame. One thing was evident; namely, that while my mind was employed with these thoughts it turned away from its former objects of desire, and seriously considered the search for a new principle: this state of things was a great comfort to me, for I perceived that the evils were not such as to resist all remedies. Although these intervals were at first rare, and of very short duration, yet afterwards, as the true good became more and more discernible to me, they became more frequent and more lasting; especially after I had recognized that the acquisition of wealth, sensual pleasure, or fame, is only a hindrance, so long as they are sought as ends, not as means: if they be sought as means, they will be under restraint; and far from being hindrances, will further not a little the end for which they are sought, as I will show in due time.

I will here only briefly state what I mean by true good, and also what is the nature of the highest good. In order that this may be rightly understood, we must bear in mind that the terms good and evil are only applied relatively; so that the same thing may be called both good and bad, according to the relations in view, in the same way as it may be called perfect or imperfect. Nothing regarded in its own nature can be called perfect or imperfect; especially when we are aware that all things which come to pass, come to pass according to the eternal order and fixed laws of nature. However, human weakness cannot attain to this order of its own thoughts; but meanwhile man conceives a human character much more stable than his own, and sees that there is no reason why he should not himself acquire such a character. Thus he is led to seek for means which will bring him to this pitch of perfection, and calls everything which will serve as such means a true good. The chief good is that he should arrive, together with other individuals if possible, at the possession of the aforesaid character. What that character is we shall show in due time,—namely, that it is the knowledge of the union existing between the mind and the whole of nature. This, then, is the end for which I strive: to attain to such a character myself, and to endeavor that many should attain to it with me. In other words, it is part of my happiness to lend a helping hand that many others may understand even as I do, that their understanding and desire may entirely agree with my own. In order to bring this about, it is necessary to understand as much of nature as will enable us to attain to the aforesaid character; and also to form a social order such as is most conducive to the attainment of this character by the greatest number, with the least difficulty and danger. We must seek the assistance of moral philosophy and the theory of education; further, as health is no insignificant means for attaining our end, we must also include the whole science of medicine; and as many difficult things are by contrivance rendered easy, and we can in this way gain much time and convenience, the science of mechanics must in no way be despised. But before all things, a means must be devised for improving the understanding and purifying it, as far as may be, at the outset, so that it may apprehend things without error, and in the best possible way.

Thus it is apparent to every one that I wish to direct all sciences to one end and aim, so that we may attain to the supreme human perfection which we have named; and therefore, whatsoever in the sciences does not serve to promote one object will have to be rejected as useless. To sum up the matter in a word, all our actions and thoughts must be directed to this one end. Yet as it is necessary that while we are endeavoring to attain our purpose, and bring the understanding into the right path, we should carry on our life, we are compelled first of all to lay down certain rules of life as provisionally good,—to wit, the following:—

I. To speak in a manner intelligible to the multitude, and to comply with every general custom that does not hinder the attainment of our purpose. For we can gain from the multitude no small advantages, provided that we strive to accommodate ourselves to its understanding as far as possible; moreover, we shall in this way gain a friendly audience for the reception of the truth.

II. To indulge ourselves with pleasures only in so far as they are necessary for preserving health.

III. Lastly, to endeavor to obtain only sufficient money or other commodities to enable us to preserve our life and health, and to follow such general customs as are consistent with our purpose.

MENTAL FREEDOM

At length I pass to the remaining portion of my 'Ethics,' which is concerned with the way leading to freedom. I shall therefore treat therein of the power of the reason, showing how far the reason can control the emotions, and what is the nature of mental freedom or blessedness: we shall then be able to see how much more powerful the wise man is than the ignorant. It is no part of my design to point out the method and means whereby the understanding may be perfected, nor to show the skill whereby the body may be so tended as to be capable of the due performance of its functions. The latter question lies in the province of medicine, the former in the province of logic. Here, therefore, I repeat, I shall treat only of the power of the mind, or of reason; and I shall mainly show the extent and nature of its dominion over the emotions, for their control and moderation.

That we do not possess absolute dominion over them, I have already shown. Yet the Stoics have thought that the emotions depended absolutely on our will, and that we could absolutely govern them. But these philosophers were compelled — by the protest of experience, not from their own principles — to confess that no slight practice and zeal is needed to control and moderate them; and this some one endeavored to illustrate by the example (if I remember rightly) of two dogs,— the one a house-dog and the other a hunting-dog. For by long training it could be brought about that the house-dog should become accustomed to hunt, and the hunting-dog to cease from running after hares.

To this opinion Descartes not a little inclines. For he maintained that the soul or mind is specially united to a particular part of the brain,— namely, to that part called the pineal gland, — by the aid of which the mind is enabled to feel all the movements which are set going in the body, and also external objects; and which the mind by a simple act of volition can put in motion in various ways. He asserted that this gland is so suspended in the midst of the brain that it could be moved by the slightest motion of the animal spirits; further, that this gland is suspended in the midst of the brain in as many different manners as the animal spirits can impinge thereon; and again, that as many different marks are impressed on the said gland as there are different external objects which impel the animal spirits towards it: whence it follows, that if the will of the soul suspends the gland in a position wherein it has already been suspended once before by the animal spirits driven in one way or another, the gland in its turn reacts on the said spirits, driving and determining them to the condition wherein they were when repulsed before by a similar position of the gland.

He further asserted that every act of mental volition is united in nature to a certain given motion of the gland. For instance, whenever any one desires to look at a remote object, the act of volition causes the pupil of the eye to dilate; whereas if the person in question had only thought of the dilation of the pupil, the mere wish to dilate it would not have brought about the result, inasmuch as the motion of the gland, which serves to impel the animal spirits towards the optic nerve in a way which would dilate or contract the pupil, is not associated in nature with the wish to dilate or contract the pupil, but with the wish to look at remote or very near objects.

Lastly, he maintained that although every motion of the aforesaid gland seems to have been united by nature to one particular thought, out of the whole number of our thoughts, from the very beginning of our life, yet it can nevertheless become through habituation associated with other thoughts: this he endeavors to prove in the ‘Passions de l'Âme.’ He thence concludes that there is no soul so weak that it cannot, under proper direction, acquire absolute power over its passions. For passions as defined by him are «perceptions, or feelings, or disturbances of the soul, which are referred to the soul as species, and which (mark the expression) are produced, preserved, and strengthened, through some movement of the spirits.» But seeing that we can join any motion of the gland, or consequently of the spirits, to any volition, the determination of the will depends entirely on our own powers; if therefore we determine our will with sure and firm decisions in the direction to which we wish our actions to tend, and associate the motions of the passions which we wish to acquire with the said decisions, we shall acquire an absolute dominion over our passions.

Such is the doctrine of this illustrious philosopher (in so far as I gather it from his own words): it is one, which, had it been less ingenious, I could hardly believe to have proceeded from so great a man. Indeed, I am lost in wonder that a philosopher who had stoutly asserted that he would draw no conclusions which do not follow from self-evident premises, and would affirm nothing which he did not clearly and distinctly perceive, and who had so often taken to task the scholastics for wishing to explain obscurities through occult qualities, could maintain a hypothesis beside which occult qualities are commonplace. What does he understand, I ask, by the union of the mind and the body? What clear and distinct conception has he got of thought in most intimate union with a certain particle of extended matter? Truly I should like him to explain this union through its proximate cause. But he had so distinct a conception of mind being distinct from body, that he could not assign any particular cause of the union between the two, or of the mind itself, but was obliged to have recourse to the cause of the whole universe,—that is, to God.

Further, I should much like to know what degree of motion the mind can impart to this pineal gland, and with what force can it hold it suspended? For I am in ignorance whether this gland can be agitated more slowly or more quickly by the mind than by the animal spirits, and whether the motions of the passions, which we have closely united with firm decisions, cannot be again disjoined therefrom by physical causes; in which case it would follow that although the mind firmly intended to face a given danger, and had united to this decision the motions of boldness, yet at the sight of the danger the gland might become suspended in a way which would preclude the mind thinking of anything except running away.

In truth, as there is no common standard of volition and motion, so is there no comparison possible between the powers of the mind and the power or strength of the body; consequently the strength of one cannot in any wise be determined by the strength of the other. We may also add that there is no gland discoverable in the midst of the brain, so placed that it can thus easily be set in motion in so many ways; and also that all the nerves are not prolonged so far as the cavities of the brain. Lastly, I omit all the assertions which he makes concerning the will and its freedom, inasmuch as I have abundantly proved that his premises are false. Therefore since the power of the mind, as I have shown above, is defined by the understanding only, we shall determine solely by the knowledge of the mind the remedies against the emotions, which I believe all have had experience of, but do not accurately observe or distinctly see; and from the same basis we shall deduce all those conclusions which have regard to the mind's blessedness.

SUPERSTITION AND FEAR

MEN would never be superstitious if they could govern all their circumstances by set rules, or if they were always favored by fortune; but being frequently driven into straits where rules are useless, and being often kept fluctuating pitiably between hope and fear by the uncertainty of fortune's greedily coveted favors, they are consequently, for the most part, very prone to credulity. The human mind is readily swerved this way or that in times of doubt, especially when hope and fear are struggling for the mastery; though usually it is boastful, over-confident, and vain.

This as a general fact I suppose every one knows, though few, I believe, know their own nature: no one can have lived in the world without observing that most people, when in prosperity, are so over-brimming with wisdom (however inexperienced they may be) that they take every offer of advice as a personal insult; whereas in adversity they know not where to turn, but beg and pray for counsel from every passer-by. No plan is then too futile, too absurd, or too fatuous for their adoption; the most frivolous causes will raise them to hope, or plunge them into despair; if anything happens during their fright which reminds them of some past good or ill, they think it portends a happy or unhappy issue, and therefore (though it may have proved abortive a hundred times before) style it a lucky or unlucky omen. Anything which excites their astonishment they believe to be a portent signifying the anger of the gods or of the Supreme Being; and mistaking superstition for religion, account it impious not to avert the evil with prayer and sacrifice. Signs and wonders of this sort they conjure up perpetually, till one might think Nature as mad as themselves, they interpret her so fantastically.

Thus it is brought prominently before us that superstition's chief victims are those persons who greedily covet temporal advantages; they it is, who (especially when they are in danger, and cannot help themselves) are wont with prayers and womanish tears to implore help from God: upbraiding Reason as blind, because she cannot show a sure path to the shadows they pursue, and rejecting human wisdom as vain; but believing the phantoms of imagination, dreams, and other childish absurdities, to be the very oracles of Heaven. As though God had turned away from the wise, and written his decrees, not in the mind of man but in the entrails of beasts, or left them to be proclaimed by the inspiration and instinct of fools, madmen, and birds. Such is the unreason to which terror can drive mankind!

Superstition then is engendered, preserved, and fostered, by fear. If any one desire an example, let him take Alexander, who only began superstitiously to seek guidance from seers, when he first learnt to fear fortune in the passes of Sysis (Curtius, v. 4); whereas after he had conquered Darius he consulted prophets no more, till a second time frightened by reverses. When the Scythians were provoking a battle, the Bactrians had deserted, and he himself was lying sick of his wounds, "he once more turned to superstition, the mockery of human wisdom, and bade Aristander, to whom he confided his credulity, inquire the issue of affairs with sacrificed victims." Very numerous examples of a like nature might be cited, clearly showing the fact that only while under the dominion of fear do men fall a prey to superstition; that all the portents ever invested with the reverence of misguided religion are mere phantoms of dejected and fearful minds; and lastly, that prophets have most power among the people, and are most formidable to rulers, precisely at those times when the State is in most peril. I think this is sufficiently plain to all, and will therefore say no more on the subject.

The origin of superstition above given affords us a clear reason for the fact that it comes to all men naturally,—though some refer its rise to a dim notion of God, universal to mankind,—and also tends to show that it is no less inconsistent and variable than other mental hallucinations and emotional impulses, and further that it can only be maintained by hope, hatred, anger, and deceit; since it springs not from reason, but solely from the more powerful phases of emotion. Furthermore, we may readily understand how difficult it is to maintain in the same course men prone to every form of credulity. For as the mass of mankind remains always at about the same pitch of misery, it never assents long to any one remedy, but is always best pleased by a novelty which has not yet proved illusive.

This element of inconsistency has been the cause of many terrible wars and revolutions; for as Curtius well says (Lib. iv., Chap. 10), "The mob has no ruler more potent than superstition," and is easily led, on the plea of religion, at one moment to adore its kings as gods, and anon to execrate and abjure them as humanity's common bane. Immense pains have therefore been taken to counteract this evil by investing religion, whether true or false, with such pomp and ceremony that it may rise superior to every shock, and be always observed with studious reverence by the whole people; a system which has been brought to great perfection by the Turks, for they consider even controversy impious, and so clog men's minds with dogmatic formulas that they leave no room for sound reason,—not even enough to doubt with.

But if, in despotic statecraft, the supreme and essential mystery be to hoodwink the subjects, and to mask the fear which keeps them down with the specious garb of religion, so that men may fight as bravely for slavery as for safety, and count it not shame but highest honor to risk their blood and their lives for the vainglory of a tyrant; yet in a free State no more mischievous expedient could be planned or attempted. Wholly repugnant to the general freedom are such devices as enthralling men's minds with prejudices, forcing their judgment, or employing any of the weapons of quasi-religious sedition; indeed, such seditions only spring up when law enters the domain of speculative thought, and opinions are put on trial and condemned on the same footing as crimes, while those who defend and follow them are sacrificed, not to public safety, but to their opponents' hatred and cruelty. If deeds only could be made the grounds of criminal charges, and words were always allowed to pass free, such seditions would be divested of every semblance of justification, and would be separated from mere controversies by a hard and fast line.

Now, seeing that we have the rare happiness of living in a republic, where every one's judgment is free and unshackled, where each may worship God as his conscience dictates, and where freedom is esteemed before all things dear and precious, I have believed that I should be undertaking no ungrateful or unprofitable task, in demonstrating that not only can such freedom be granted without prejudice to the public peace, but also that without such freedom, piety cannot flourish nor the public peace be secure.

Such is the chief conclusion I seek to establish in this treatise: but in order to reach it, I must first point out the misconceptions which, like scars of our former bondage, still disfigure our notion of religion; and must expose the false views about the civil authority which many have most imprudently advocated, endeavoring to turn the mind of the people, still prone to heathen superstition, away from its legitimate rulers, and so bring us again into slavery. As to the order of my treatise I will speak presently; but first I will recount the causes which led me to write.

I have often wondered that persons who make a boast of professing the Christian religion — namely, love, joy, peace, temperance, and charity to all men — should quarrel with such rancorous animosity, and display daily towards one another such bitter hatred; that this, rather than the virtues they claim, is the readiest criterion of their faith. Matters have long since come to such a pass, that one can only pronounce a man Christian, Turk, Jew, or heathen, by his general appearance and attire, by his frequenting this or that place of worship, or employing the phraseology of a particular sect; as for manner of life, it is in all cases the same. Inquiry into the cause of this anomaly leads me unhesitatingly to ascribe it to the fact that the ministries of the Church are regarded by the masses merely as dignities, her offices as posts of emolument,— in short, popular religion may be summed up as respect for ecclesiastics. The spread of this misconception inflamed every worthless fellow with an intense desire to enter holy orders, and thus the love of diffusing God's religion degenerated into sordid avarice and ambition. Every church became a theatre, where orators instead of church teachers harangued; caring not to instruct the people, but striving to attract admiration, to bring opponents to public scorn, and to preach only novelties and paradoxes, such as would tickle the ears of their congregation. This state of things necessarily stirred up an amount of controversy, envy, and hatred, which no lapse of time could appease; so that we can scarcely wonder that of the old religion nothing survives but its outward forms (even these, in the mouth of the multitude, seem rather adulation than adoration of the Deity), and that faith has become a mere compound of credulity and prejudices,— aye, prejudices too which degrade man from rational being to beast, which completely stifle the power of judgment between true and false, which seem in fact carefully fostered for the purpose of extinguishing the last spark of reason! Piety — great God! — and religion are become a tissue of ridiculous mysteries: men who flatly despise reason, who reject and turn away from understanding as naturally corrupt, these I say, these of all men, are thought — oh, lie most horrible! — to possess light from on high. Verily, if they had but one spark of light from on high, they would not insolently rave, but would learn to worship God more wisely, and would be as marked among their fellows for mercy as they now are for malice: if they were concerned for their opponents' souls instead of for their own reputations, they would no longer fiercely persecute, but rather be filled with pity and compassion.

HARRIET PRESCOTT SPOFFORD

(1835–)

The work of Harriet Prescott Spofford possesses to a high degree the quality of distinction. About her prose and her verse is the atmosphere of spiritual aristocracy, of rarity, as of that which emanates from one elect in mind and soul; yet this refinement of vision in no sense implies coldness. Mrs. Spofford, like Pater, combines an almost austere spirituality with the warm sensuousness of the artist, who lives in full and blissful consciousness of color and light and form. These characteristics receive their completest expression in her greatest short story, ‹The Amber Gods.› Seldom or never has the appreciation of the imperiousness of the senses been blended so perfectly with the recognition of the authority of the soul. These two elements, of flesh and of spirit, are again fused in ‹In Titian's Garden,› a poem itself like some great flower.

Harriet Spofford

A New England Puritan by descent, Harriet Prescott was born in Calais, Maine, April 3d, 1835. During her childhood the family removed to the quaint old coast-town of Newburyport, Massachusetts, where her early girlhood passed, and where she attended school,—her unfolding genius attracting the attention of T. W. Higginson, who, now widely known as a distinguished man of letters, was at that time a clergyman and the young girl's pastor. It is related that when she sent to the Atlantic Monthly her first contribution,—a brilliant and subtle study of French life, called ‹In a Cellar,›—the editor wrote to Newburyport for an assurance that this ingenious tale of love and diplomacy was not a translation from some French master of the short story; and that Mr. Higginson cheerfully gave the necessary guarantee of good faith, adding that the young author had never been out of New England, and that her brilliant Paris was a city of the imagination. At twenty she had finished a romance, ‹Sir Rohan's Ghost›; and she was only a year or two older when ‹The Amber Gods› appeared in the Atlantic. The sustained strength, intense dramatic movement, psychic perception, and rich vocabulary, so prodigally displayed therein, became the obvious characteristics of her later work. If she has done many other things as well, during a long and scarcely interrupted literary career, she has done nothing better. Her fiction is characterized not alone by opulent style, mastery of plot, charm of quick transition from the gay to the sad, from the tragic to the comic, by skill in dialogue and management of climax; but by that quality of distinction already spoken of. Moreover, in every-day themes of every-day existence she has the happy art of transfiguring the commonplace.

Among her stories of greater length than the ordinary magazine sketch are 'Sir Rohan's Ghost'; 'The Thief in the Night'; 'The Master-Spirit,' which reveals a deep knowledge of the history of music and comprehension of its divine language; and 'The Inheritance,' which deals both keenly and tenderly with an appalling problem of human destiny.

In 1865 Miss Prescott married Mr. Richard Spofford; a brilliant young lawyer of the Massachusetts bar, whose literary tastes and cultivated critical judgment encouraged her gifts to a fine and constant flowering.

Mrs. Spofford's published volumes are seventeen in all, among them several volumes of poems and ballads; the last, 'In Titian's Garden,' displaying the rich maturity of her powers,—for it is in poetry that her mind finds its fullest expression. Her literary masters have been Homer, Shakespeare, Milton, and Browning.

As an essayist, and a writer of forcible editorials on current events, she has great skill; having the courage of her convictions, and a manner at once energetic, sincere, and winning. She takes first rank among American women of letters, because she possesses the entire range of the artist,—the domain of the seen and the domain of the unseen.

[By permission of Mr. John Brisben Walker, editor of 'The Cosmopolitan.']

THE GODMOTHERS

THEY were all bidden to the christening, all the godmothers—if by good hap none had been forgotten.

And of course they came. The christening of a L'Aiglenoir Franche du Roy was no mean occasion, under the circumstances, but one to which the family must do honor, if they hastened from the ends of the earth—and beyond.

They did not arrive with the stir befitting L'Aiglenoir Franche du Roys. But that might be because of the inborn gentilesse which taught them the proprieties of the sick-room. The young mother, as she lay in the dim vast chamber of the old castle, hearing the cry of the wind over the cold Atlantic, saw them come in singly, and in groups, and at intervals. Very faint and weak, and with some awe in her soul before the new being she had evoked, perhaps she dropped asleep in the space of time between their coming; for when she opened her startled eyes, another was appearing.

At first Rosomond did not comprehend it. She felt annoyed at the intrusion. She turned her eyes to the place where the bassinet swung under its laces; the pair of candles in the wall sconce behind it making that the sole spot of light in the long room full of shadows, where lay the little morsel of life for which she had so nearly surrendered her own, and toward which her heart swelled with a sense of infinite dearness. « Do not, do not touch him! » she murmured apprehensively to the woman bending there with her purples sweeping about her, and the glitter of her diamonds like dagger-points.

And then the plumed and coroneted woman had disappeared behind a curtain into the recesses of the deep casements, perhaps; and the young countess closed her eyes forgetfully.

« Yes, » she was saying to herself, when with a little flutter her lids opened again, some time afterwards, « that is the old countess who brought the Franche du Roy lands to the L'Aiglenoirs. It is her portrait that hangs high next the oriel in the sea-gallery. I could never satisfy myself, as I walked there in the late afternoons, if it were a shadow of the carved ceiling on her forehead, or a stain that had come out. The stain is there now. She was a king's favorite.

« Do not touch my little innocent child! » she cried suddenly, rising on one arm. Did her senses deceive her? Did she hear the woman answer, « But it is my child too! »

And a shudder seized her as suddenly: that woman's blood ran in her child's veins! Ah, if she knew just where, she would let it out this minute! And then she fell back, laughing at herself.

There were others in the room when her gaze again wandered down its length. Oh, yes, she had seen them all before. Had they stepped from their frames in the long sea-gallery?

The beautiful young being in the white brocade sown with violets, the band of brilliants in her red-gold hair, mother of the count's father, she who later had rivaled Eugénie in Eugénie's court,— Eugénie, who had the resources of an empire, and the L'Aiglenoirs had nothing,— yet, ah no, it was empty sound, the scandal that those resplendent toilets were a part of the bribes of senators. She who was a Bourbon D'Archambeau! Nor would Rosomond believe the rumor concerning moneys obtained by the dexterous writing of great officials' names — forgery, counterfeit, what you will — by that other laughing lovely thing, a wife out of the convent, a mother at sixteen, the last countess, launched upon life without a scruple or a sou, who loved pleasure so passionately that she came to live at last upon chloral and opium, and died dancing.

She had often silently made friends with these captivating young women, when unable to go out, and during her lonely pacing up and down the length of the sea-gallery, with the low roar of the surge in her ears; while her husband, who had brought her down here with a loving fancy that his child might be born in the ancestral stronghold which some of her own millions were restoring to its ancient grandeur, was away on the water, or in the hunt, or perhaps at the races.

She would not think ill of them now: they alone of all the women on the wall had not seemed to think ill of her, to look at her as a parvenu and an interloper; had seemed to have about them something of the spirit of the century, to have breathed air she breathed herself.

It was natural that the last countess, the pretty piquant creature, should have loved splendid gowns; — kept in homespun all the earlier days by her father's mother, the old marchioness, — the miser whose hands grew yellow counting her gold. Tante Alixe had told Rosomond of it. There she was now, — the old marchioness, — gasping for more air, but just as she was painted in her dusky robes; with the long ivory hands like the talons of a bird of prey, — the talons of a L'Aiglenoir, — mumbling of the revenue she had wrung from her peasants, who starved on black bread to buy of her the privilege of living.

Perhaps it was thought she had that privilege too long herself. She had died suddenly — very suddenly. Her son, the marquis, was a partisan and a man of power: a great deal of gold was needed in the intrigues concerning the two kings.

And here was another who had died suddenly — but in the open air. There was a red line round her slender throat, too dull for the ruby necklace she wore in the portrait in the panel; the tall, fair aristocrat whose long white throat, alas! had felt the swift kiss of the guillotine's blade. There was not the look of hate and horror in the portrait that was on her face now; only the languor of many pleasures there, the proud and insolent indifference to the pain, the want, the suffering, from which those pleasures had been pressed like wine that left the must.

"The canaille," she seemed to say,—"they die? so much the less vermin. They suffer? and what of it?"

Her husband had told Rosomond when he first led her down the long sea-gallery, the story of this proud lady who thought the world made only for her class. It had passed the idle hour: Rosomond had not thought of it again. He had told her all their stories,—that of the strangely wrinkled old baroness, with her eyes like sparks of fire in the midst of ashes, once herself blooming and fair to see, who had kept the keys of the king's hunting-lodge, and provided for his pleasures there. "Well, yes," the young count had said, "but what will you have? She was no worse than her time. They were infamous times." He had told her of that blue-eyed waxen woman painted in the Sir Peter Lely,—a beauty who had followed the fortunes of Charles Stuart into France, very like, but who had come into the L'Aiglenoir family later by the church door; of the Vandyke,—the blonde devotee who went over with La Reine Henriette, and came to a madhouse at last; of the Antonio Moro, vanishing in her golden-brown shadows,—an attendant of the English Mary, a confidante of Philip of Spain, who had read her missal at an auto da fé; of the Rubens,—the half-clad woman like an overblown rose, a great red rose with the sun on its velvet and dewy petals;—if face and frame spoke for her, a woman who was only an embodied sin;—of the Holbein,—a creature whose appetites had devoured her and left themselves only on the canvas; of the possible Titian—"See the gold of her hair," said the count. "It was dyed. But all the same, Titian—it must have been Titian—knew how to hide the sun in every strand. What a lustre of skin! What a bloom on the cheek—it never blushed with shame. What a luscious lip—it knew forbidden kisses, it denounced a brother to the Ten. What a glory in the eye—yet if all traditions are true, that eye saw a lover disappear as the gondola touched the deep water that tells no tales. See the hand: what contour, what fineness, what delicacy—and the life in it! But it knew how to play with a poniard whose tip was touched with poison. She did her little best to betray Venice for a price; and she had to leave with the French army, of course."

«I should think you would be glad it is all only tradition,» Rosomond had said.

«I don't know. You see the king gave her a duchy, and she brought it into the family. The title lapsed, to be sure; and the revenues went long ago in gaming debts. Do you note that damsel in the white satin,—the Geraart Terburg? Her face is like a live pearl. Well, she was the stake once in some high play.»

«That would have been dreadful if it were true.»

«As you please,» said the count with a shrug.

«And were there no good women, no honorable men?»

«Oh, but plenty! But, ma chérie, happiness has no history, virtue has few adventures. Their portraits fade out on the wall as they themselves do in the line. It is the big wills, the big passions, that are memorable—that drown out those others, the weak, that have made the L'Aiglenoirs what they are. Those imbeciles, they are like René's father the day of his burial, 'as if he had never existed.'» And he went on with his narrative.

«But it is a gallery! If we had it at home, and—pardon—reckoned its commercial value—»

«Alas! The pictures are no more certified than the traditions! And then, one does not willingly part with one's people. Yet—if that were indeed a Titian—»

«You would not have gone over to America to marry me.»

«I should not perhaps have gone over to America to marry the heiress of the New World, repeating the adventures of the knights of long ago, but in modern dress. I should have had no need. But I would have married you, Rosomond, had I met you on the dark side of the moon, or else have flung myself headlong into space!»

«You forget the attraction of gravitation.»

«Your attraction is the greater.»

«Now I do not believe you. The language of hyperbole is not the language of truth.»

«Pleasantry aside, you must always believe I speak truth, my wife, when I say that whatever led me in the beginning, it is love that overcame me in the end. I could not perhaps have married,—I who love pleasure too,—if you had not been the daughter of Dives. For we were beggared—we poor L'Aiglenoir Franche du Roys. But the thing being made possible, I simply entered heaven, Rosomond!»

«And I,» said Rosomond, as she stood in the deep window-place, looking up at him a moment, and back again swiftly to the sea.

«And if it were a title against a fortune, as Newport said, and as the Faubourg held a matter of course — although Heaven knows a title means nothing now, and will not till the King — the good God have his Majesty in keeping! — is at home again — »

«Oh, let us forget all that, fortune or title!» Rosomond had said.

«No, no. For if the fortune arrive to repair the fortunes of the house of L'Aiglenoir, why not? It is your house, Rosomond. It is the house of your child. And we will make a new house of it. The L'Aiglenoir of the twentieth century shall again be the prime minister of the King of France. The new blood, the new gold, shall make new fortunes, shall bring back the old force and will and power; and we will leave these dusty memories behind, and ask no one of them to the christening!»

«Perhaps so,» Rosomond had said, half under her breath. «But you have been a self-indulgent, pleasure-loving people,» she added presently. «And with rank, with wealth, with opportunity — it does not tend to bring back the old brute strength.»

«Well, then,» the count lightly answered her, «let us take some of the pleasure! See, how purple is the water beyond the white lip on the reefs. We will go try the outer sea, and drift an hour or two in the soft wind. And I will tell you how beautiful you are, ma belle Américaine, and you shall tell me what a sailor I am. It is not the sailing of the old sea-robber who came down here to assault the castle in the days of that grandmother of mine twenty times removed, in the days of La Dame Blanche, to take her with her belongings and marry her by storm — but it is pleasanter, my sweet.»

That had been in the bright spring months. Now autumn winds swept the Atlantic, and cried in the tops of the ragged pines below the castle's cliff. Many a day had Rosomond sat there, listening for the sea measures, and fancying the beat of the surf was the washing of the wave under the keel that carried Tristan and Isolde, a thousand years ago and more, on the waters just beyond; heard the very music of Isolde's wild lament; watched for the white sail across the reef as if the sick knight lay in the court-yard within under the linden-tree, in all the pathos of song and beauty and tragic fate; felt herself taken into a world of romance, where the murmuring of the breeze in the bough was the murmur of the skirts of the great forest of Broceliande.

But this had nothing to do with romance now. She lay in bed, with her little child near at hand,—the attendants just without,—in the tower chamber where for generations the L'Aiglenoirs had been born.

Through the deep windows she saw the swift-flying moon touch the clouds sweeping in the wind, and light the swale on the dark and lifted sea beyond; look in and now and again silver the faces of the paladins and maidens in the pale blue-green forest of the old tapestry, that slightly rippled and rose and fell, as if with a consciousness of the windy gust that sung outside the tower. It was that old paladin with the truncheon—a paladin of Charlemagne's—from whom the Franche du Roys counted. It was the châtelaine with the flagon that gave him his quietus.

What did it all mean, though, at this moment? With the heavy swaying of the tapestry, had these people by any chance left their silken shroud and come out into the room to look at the child?

Not the twelve white-faced nuns; not the featureless young squires and dames: but that old châtelaine of whose needle-wrought semblance she had always been half afraid,—who carried the golden flagon and gave the knight to drink, perhaps for sleep, perhaps for death. Yes, that was she; but she had left her majesty in the hangings, with her veil and horned head-piece, her trailing samite and cloth of gold of cramoisie. Here, with her thin gray tattered locks, pallid, pinched, and shrunken, white as some reptile blanched beneath a stone, what was she to be afraid of now? But this other—"Once the place was mine, mine and my love's!" she was exclaiming. "Till the sea darkened with their gilded prows, the sky darkened with their bitter arrows!" Ah, yes, how many hundreds of years ago it was since she defended the castle after a lance-head laid her lord low; and the sea-rover had scaled the heights and taken her, loathing and hating him, to wife. And from them had been born the line of the L'Aiglenoirs!

And what was she doing here? What were they all doing here, these women? What right had they in her room? Why were they looking with such ardent and eager eyes, murmuring among themselves, hurrying past one another toward the child?

«Give way!» was La Dame Blanche exclaiming. «I was the first.»

«Après moi,» said the laughing lady, flittering along in her butterfly gauzes, the diamonds in her tiara flashing out and reluming again. «I am the last.»

«If so false a thing ever existed at all,» said the woman with the mass-book,—or was it a book of jests?—the Flemish woman who sold her daughter for a tulip.

«I give you my word I existed!» was the gay reply.

«Under your own signature?» asked the pretty patched and powdered Watteau.

«Never mind whose signature.»

«Worthless,» murmured a lady, lifting her black lace mask from features sharp as a death's-head, and of a tint as wan as the tints of a Boucher design,—«worthless in any event.»

«Ah, madame, from you to me? I was but your natural consequence, you Voltairiennes, as you were all born on the night of St. Bartholomew!»

«Its tocsin still rings in the air! I am condemned ever to hear the boom of the bell,» complained the dark person with the rosary.

And then the laughing lady twitched her beads; and there fell out from her sleeve the perfumed fan whose breath was fever, the gloves whose palms were deadly, brought with her Medicean mistress from Italy.

«A truce!» cried the gay lady. «The birth of an heir to the L'Aiglenoir Franche du Roys, with wealth to restore the ancient splendor, is an event for due ceremony and precedence. I am the child's grandmother, his very next of kin among us. And you know the rights of the grandmother in France.»

«They are our rights!» came a shrill multitudinous murmur. «We all are grandmothers!»

«Are we all here?» came a hollow whisper from the châtelaine, the candlelight flickering in her flagon.

«All the fairy godmothers?» cried the gay lady.

«No, no,» said La Dame Blanche: «there is one who has been forgotten.»

«The wicked fairy,» said the gay lady. «The rest of us are of such a virtue. He will value us like his other *objets de vertu.*»

A cold shiver coursed over Rosomond, but her eyes burned with the intensity of her gaze. She understood it now. He was the child of their blood. That was why they were here, why they intruded themselves into her room. They had a right. It had been their own room. For how many generations had the L'Aiglenoirs been born in this room! She had never thought of this when she sailed so gayly out of harbor, a bride with her bridegroom, wearing his title, protected by his arm, so proud, so glad, so happy that she had the wealth he needed,—all that so trifling beside the fact that they loved each other. She had never dreamed of the little child to come, who would be dearer than her life to her, and in whose veins must run a black drop of the blood of all these creatures.

And now—oh, was there no remedy? Was there nothing to counteract it, nothing to dissipate that black drop, to make it colorless, powerless, harmless, a thing of air? Were there no sweet, good people among all those dead and gone women?

Ah, yes, indeed, there they were! Far off, by the curtain of the doorway, huddled together like a flock of frightened doves: gentle ladies, quiet, timid, humble before heaven; ladies of placid lives, no opportunities, small emotions, narrow routine; praying by form, acting by precedent, without individuality; whose goodness was negative, whose doings were paltry; their poor drab beings swamped and drowned and extinguished in the purples and scarlets of these women of great passions, of scope, of daring and deed and electric force, mates of men of force, whose position had called crime to its aid, whose very crimes had enlarged them, whose sins were things of power, strengthening their personality if but for evil, transmitting their potentiality—oh, no, these gentle ladies signified nothing here!

A cold dew bathed Rosomond and beaded her brow. But were the L'Aiglenoirs and their order all there were? Where were her own people? Had they no right in the child? Could they not cross the seas? Was there no requiting strength among them? None in the mother of her father,—king of railroads and mines and vast southwestern territory,—that stern, repressed woman, who had spared and starved and saved to start her son in life? «Come!» cried Rosomond. «Come, my own people! Oh, I need you now, I and my child!»

But among all these splendid dames of quality, accustomed to wide outlook on the world, and a part of the events of nations, what had these village people to do,— these with their petty concerns, the hatching of chickens, the counting of eggs, the quilting of stitches; these perhaps more prosperous, with interests never going outside the burgh, whose virtues were passive, whose highest dream was of a heaven like their own parlors, a God in their own image: whose lives were eventless, whose memories were pallid, laid aside in the sweep of the great drama and without a part; whose slighter nature was swollen, and whose larger nature was shriveled from disuse? This colonial dame,— her father the distilled essence of old Madeira and oily Jamaica, her heart in her lace, her china, and her sweetmeat closet, her scrofulous and scorbutic son lixiviated by indulgence,— had she much counteracting force to give? Or had this one, in whom quarreled forever the mingled blood of persecuted Quaker and persecuting Puritan? Or this pale wife of the settler, haunted by fear of the Indian, the apparitions of the forest, and the terrors of her faith; or this other, the red-cloaked matron, fighting fire with fire, the familiar of witches? Was there help to be hoped for from this bland Pilgrim woman, who, through force of circumstances, was married with her nursling in her arms while her husband was but three months dead? And did this downcast-eyed, white-kerchiefed mistress, whose steadfastness her hardness countervailed,— daughter of the Mayflower, the new sea-rover coming out of the East, whose Norse fathers had come out of the East before,— do more than carry her back to the old Danes and Vikings ambushed in their creeks? Her people, indeed! Returning on the source — oh, it was all one and the same! It was all misery!

What gifts were these grandmothers going to give the child then? she asked. Pride and lust and cruelty, mocking impiety and falsehood, bigotry that belied heaven as bitterly as unbelief, vanity and selfishness and hate, theft and avarice and murder? In the wild and wicked current of their blood the tide was hopelessly against him — his bones would be poured out like water! Her pulse bounded, her brain was on fire.— Oh, no, no, the little child — the new-born — some one must come — some one must help — some one!

Some one was coming. There was a stir without; the wind was singing round the buttress as if it brought on its wings the cry of the bright sea, the murmur of the wide wood; the moonlight streamed in full and free.

«It is she,» said La Dame Blanche.

«The wicked fairy — the unbidden godmother,» said the gay lady with a warning gesture.

«The one whom civilization has forgotten,» said the Voltairienne, readjusting her mask, «and whom culture has ignored.»

How sweet were the thunders of the sea sifted through distance, the whispers of the wave creaming up the shingle, that crept into the room like the supporting harmony of the wind's song! There was a rustle as if of all the leaves of the forest, a quiver of reeds over blue water reflecting blue heaven, a sighing of long grass above the nests of wild bees in the sunshine. And who was this swift and supple creature with her free and fearless foot, large-limbed and lofty as Thusnelda, clad in her white wolfskin, with the cloud of her yellow hair fallen about her, carrying her green bough, strong, calm, sure, but with no smile upon her radiant face?

«The original savage,» whispered the gay lady, as sovereign and serene the unbidden godmother moved up the room; and the others seemed to dissolve before her coming — to waver away and to vanish.

She parted the hangings of the bassinet, and rested her hand upon the sleeper of his first sleep, bending and gazing long.

«Waken,» she said then, as she lifted and laid him at her breast. «Drink of thy first mother's life, a balsam for every ill; mother's milk that shall unpoison thy blood, and bring the thick black drops to naught. Child of the weather and all out-doors, latest child of mine, draw from me will and might and the love of the undefiled, acquaintance with the rune that shall destroy the venom that taints you, shall blast the wrong done you! Draw large, free draughts! Return to me, thou man-child! I give thee the strength of my forest, my rivers, my sea, my sunshine, my starshine, my own right arm, my heart! I cleanse thee. The slime of the long years shall not cling to thee. I start thee afresh, new-born. By night in my star-hung tent the gods shall visit thee, by day thou shalt walk in the way of becoming a god thyself. I give thee scorn for the ignoble, trust in thy fellow, dependence on thine own lusty sinew and unconquerable will,— familiar friend of hardship and content, spare and pure and strong,— joy in the earth, the sun, the wind, faith in the unseen. This is thy birthright. Whatever else the years may bring, see that thou do it no wrong. I, the unpolluted, strong wild strain in thy blood, the vital savage, save thee from thyself. Sleep now, sweet hope. The winds sing to thee, the waves lull thee, the stars affright thee not! Dear son of thy mother, sleep.»

And then a shiver ran through the long, moon-lighted tapestry, as the gust rose and fell, and the sea sighed up the reef, and there was only silence and slumber in the room.

But Rosomond's women, when they came again, wondered and were wise concerning a green bough that lay across the child.

THE KING'S DUST

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«THOU shalt die,» the priest said to the King.
«Thou shalt vanish like the leaves of spring.
Like the dust of any common thing
One day thou upon the winds shalt blow!»
«Nay, not so,» the King said: «I shall stay
While the great sun in the sky makes day;
Heaven and earth, when I do, pass away.
In my tomb I wait till all things go!»

Then the King died. And with myrrh and nard,
Washed with palm-wine, swathed in linen hard,
Rolled in naphtha-gum, and under guard
Of his steadfast tomb, they laid the King.
Century fled to century; still he lay
Whole as when they hid him first away.
Sooth, the priest had nothing more to say,—
He, it seemed, the King, knew everything.

One day armies, with the tramp of doom,
Overthrew the huge blocks of the tomb;
Swarming sunbeams searched its chambered gloom,
Bedouins camped about the sand-blown spot.
Little Arabs, answering to their name,
With a broken mummy fed the flame;
Then a wind among the ashes came,
Blew them lightly,—and the King was not!

ON AN OLD WOMAN SINGING

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Sweet are the songs that I have heard
From green boughs and the building bird;
From children bubbling o'er with tune
While sleep still held me half in swoon,
And surly bees hummed everywhere
Their drowsy bass along the air;
From hunters and the hunting-horn
Before the day-star woke the morn;
From boatmen in ambrosial dusk,
Where, richer than a puff of musk,
The blossom breath they drifted through
Fell out of branches drenched with dew.

And sweet the strains that come to me
When in great memories I see
All that full-throated quiring throng
Go streaming on the winds of song:
Her who afar in upper sky
Sounded the wild Brunhilde's cry,
With golden clash of shield and spear,
Singing for only gods to hear;
And her who on the trumpet's blare
Sang ‹Angels Ever Bright and Fair,›
Her voice, her presence, where she stood,
Already part of Angelhood.

But never have I heard in song
Sweetness and sorrow so prolong
Their life — as muted music rings
Along vibrating silver strings —
As when, with all her eighty years,
With all her fires long quenched in tears,
A little woman, with a look
Like some flower folded in a book,
Lifted a thin and piping tone,
And like the sparrow made her moan,
Forgetful that another heard,
And sang till all her soul was stirred.

And listening, oh, what joy and grief
Trembled there like a trembling leaf!

The strain where first-love thrilled the bars
Beneath the priesthood of the stars;
The murmur of soft lullabies
Above dear unconsenting eyes;
The hymns where once her pure soul trod
The heights above the hills of God,—
All on the quavering note awoke,
And in a silent passion broke,
And made that tender tune and word
The sweetest song I ever heard.

AT THE POTTER'S

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There were two vases in the sun:
A bit of common earthenware,
A rude and shapeless jar, was one;
The other — could a thing more fair
Be made of clay? Blushed not so soft
The almond blossom in the light;
A lily's stem was not so slight
With lovely lines that lift aloft
Pure grace and perfectness full-blown;
And not beneath the finger tip
So smooth, or pressed upon the lip,
The velvet petal of a rose.
Less fair were some great flower that blows
In a king's garden, changed to stone!

King's gardens do not grow such flowers,—
In a dream garden was it blown!
Fine fancies, in long sunny hours,
Brought it to beauty all its own.
With silent song its shape was wrought
From dart of wing, from droop of spray,
From colors of the breaking day,
Transfigured in a poet's thought.
At last, the finished flower of art —
The dream-flower on its slender stem —
What fierce flames fused it to a gem!
A thousand times its weight in gold
A prince paid, ere its price was told;
Then set it on a shelf apart.

But through the market's gentle gloom,
Crying his ever-fragrant oil,
That should anoint the bride in bloom,
That should the passing soul assoil,
Later the man with attar came,
And tossed a penny down and poured
In the rude jar his precious hoard.
What perfume, like a subtile flame,
Sprang through its substance happy-starred!
Whole roses into blossom leapt,
Whole gardens in its warm heart slept!
Long afterwards, thrown down in haste,
The jar lay, shattered and made waste,
But sweet to its remotest shard!

EQUATIONS

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You so sure the world is full of laughter,
Not a place in it for any sorrow,
Sunshine with no shadow to come after—
Wait, O mad one, wait until to-morrow!

You so sure the world is full of weeping,
Only gloom in all the colors seven,
Every wind across a new grave creeping—
Think, O sad one, yesterday was heaven!

* * *

Young and strong I went along the highway,
Seeking Joy from happy sky to sky;
I met Sorrow coming down a byway—
What had she to do with such as I?

Sorrow with a slow detaining gesture
Waited for me on the widening way,
Threw aside her shrouding veil and vesture—
Joy had turned to Sorrow's self that day!

* * *

If some great giver give me life,
And give me love, and give me double,
Shall I not also at his hand
Take trouble?

And if through awful gloom I see
The lightnings of his great will thrusting,
Shall I not, dying at his hand,
Die trusting?

«WHEN FIRST YOU WENT»

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When first you went, oh, desert was the day,
The lonely day, and desert was the night;
And alien was the power that robbed from me
The white and starlike beauty of your face,
The white and starlike splendor of your soul!
Since you were all of life, I too had died,—
Died, not as you into the larger life,
But into nothingness,—had not the thought
Of your bright being led outward, as a beam
Piercing the labyrinthine gloom shows light
Somewhere existing.
Like a golden lure
Bringing me to the open was the thought,—
For since I loved you still, you still must be,
And where you were, there I must follow you.
And follow, follow, follow, cried the winds,
And follow, follow, murmured all the tides,
And follow, sang the stars that wove the web
Of their white orbits far in shining space,
Where Sirius with his dark companion went.
Bound in the bands of Law they ranged the deep;
And Law, I said, means Will to utter Law;
And Will means One, indeed, to have the Will.
And having found that One, shall it not be
The One Supreme of all, whose power I prove,
Whose inconceivable intelligence
Faintly divine, and who perforce must dwell
Compact of love, that most supreme of all?
Had I found God, and should I not find you?

That love supreme will never mock my search.
That thought accordant in the infinite
The great flame of your spirit will not quench.
That power embattled through the universe

Needs in all firmaments your panoply
Of stainless purity, of crystal truth;
Your sympathy that melts into the pang,
Your blazing wrath with wrong, your tenderness
To every small or suffering thing, as sweet
As purple twilight touching throbbing eyes;
Your answer to great music when it breathes
Silver and secret speech from sphere to sphere;
Your thrill before the beauty of the earth;
Your passion for the sorrow of the race!
You who in the gray waste of night awoke
When clashing mill-bells frolicking in air
Called up the day, and sounded in your ear
Clank of enormous fetters that have bound
Labor in all lands; you whose pity went
Out on the long swell where the fisherman
Slides with his shining boat-load in the dark;
You whom the versed in statecraft paused to hear,
The sullen prisoner blest, the old man loved,
The little children ran along beside;
You who to women were the Knight of God.
Therefore as God lives, so I know do you.

And with that knowledge comes a keener joy
Than blushing, beating, folds young love about.
Again the sky burns azure, and the stars
Lean from their depths to tell me of your state.
Again the sea-line meets the line divine,
And the surge shatters in wide melody;
The unguessed hues that the soul swells to note
Haunting the rainbow's edges lead me on;
And all the dropping dews of summer nights
Keep measure with the music in my heart.
And still I climb where you have passed before,
Unchallenged spirit who inclosed my days
As in a jewel, walled about with light!
And far, far off, I seem to see you go
Familiar of unknown immensity,
And move, enlarged to all the rosy vast,
And boon companion of the dawn beyond.

MADAME DE STAËL

(1766–1817)

In the very interesting and admirable notice of Madame de Staël by her cousin, Madame Necker de Saussure, it is said: «The works of Madame de Staël seem to belong to the future. They indicate, as they also tend to produce, a new epoch in society and in letters; an age of strong, generous, living thought,—of emotions springing from the heart:» and there follows a description of the sort of literature to which Madame de Staël's writings belong,—a literature «more spoken than written,» a literature of spontaneous, informal expression, which appeals to us more intimately and more powerfully than any elaborate and studied composition. This appeal is especially intimate and powerful in Madame de Staël's pages, because she may be called, perhaps, the first «modern woman.» She had in many respects a tone of mind resembling our own more than it resembled that of the greater number of even the noteworthy men and women of her own day. There is a much greater moral distance between her and her immediate predecessors in society and in literature, than between her and her immediate successors—whether in France or elsewhere. This kinship with the last half of the nineteenth century, and with other modes of thought than those of her own country, is partly due to her Protestant form of faith. She cared little for dogmas, but the fibre of her being had been fed by liberal Protestant thought. From this cause chiefly, though there were others also, arose a striking contrast between the tone of her mind and that of her great contemporary Châteaubriand. Their opinions on all subjects were affected and colored by their religious opinions. He is now remote from us, he is read as «a classic»: she comes close to us, and inspires us with friendly emotions.

Madame de Staël

To be in advance of one's age, if one is a genius, is to tread a sure path to immortality; but if, like Madame de Staël, one is only the possessor of intellectual ability, it is the straight road to forgetfulness. Those who come after us take little interest in hearing their own ideas expressed less effectively than they themselves are expressing them; and so it happens that the world of letters now takes too little account of Madame de Staël, while her own times were incompetent to judge her. We do not value her enough: they did not value her rightly. The false and brilliant light thrown upon her by the enmity of Napoleon, obscured rather than revealed what was really interesting and noble in her; while the assumption that because there was a masculine scope and strength in her intelligence she had a masculine nature, has completely confused her image. She was not precisely *feminine*, but she was essentially a *woman;* and her most admirable powers, her highest successes, her real importance to the world, lie in the fact that her thoughts passed from her brain through a woman's heart. It must be confessed it did not always make them wiser thoughts; but it invested them with a sincerity and an ardor that give the force of fine passion to studies in politics and in literature. For these studies in politics and in literature are at bottom studies in *sociology,*— that science whose name was unknown, while its foundations were being laid by the promoters, the victims, the critics of the French Revolution; the science whose students are *lovers of humanity.*

This noble title is one to which Madame de Staël has full right. She is a leader in the great army of those who love, who honor, and who desire to serve their kind: one of those leaders who disseminate their principles and communicate their emotions, but who give no positive counsels; who show their quality chiefly by their love of liberty and their love of light. Wherever she saw the traces of liberty or the track of light, she followed fearlessly. And therefore it is, that as one of the last and one of the ablest of her critics — M. Albert Sorel — has remarked (in the excellent study of her published in the series of ‘Les Grands Écrivains Français’), few writers have exercised in so many different directions, so prolonged an influence. She had during her life, and she continues to have after her death, an immense power of inspiring other souls with lofty aspirations and high thoughts.

It is chiefly the qualities of her character that make her writings now worth reading. Her character illuminates the whole mass. Many of her pages would be dull and empty to the reader of to-day, if it were not that every sentence — involuntarily but unrestrainedly — reveals the writer. She recognized this herself, and said: «When one writes for the satisfaction of the inward inspiration that takes possession of the soul, the writings make known, even without intending it, the writer's mental conditions, of every kind and degree.» Between the lines of her own writings her whole life may be read; not her life of thought only, but her life of action.

This life of action, of incessant humane action on others, and with and for others, was of too complicated a character, and involved too many relations, to be narrated here save in the most general terms. The supreme affections of her life were, from birth to death, for her father, and during twenty years for her lover, Benjamin Constant. These two passions colored her whole existence: her ardent love and admiration for her father supplied unfailing nutriment to her heart, and her enthusiasm for Benjamin Constant (of which he was little worthy) stimulated her intellect to its most brilliant achievements. Too much stress can hardly be laid on the ennobling effects on her character of her father's influence. He can scarcely be called a great man; but she fervently adored him with the deepest gratitude all his life, and after his death, in a singularly delightful intimacy of relation.

As her father's daughter, and from her own noble powers, she became one of the most conspicuous figures in the party of the constitutional reformers, and was more or less drawn into political affairs. But she never threw herself into the current; she never left her salon, whatever was going on outside; and when the earthquake of the Revolution came and her four walls fell, she could find no refuge in any party lines. She was from first to last a witness of political events rather than an actor in them; a witness of most exceptional quality, who could distinguish in the confused and troubled present the old instincts of the past and the new beliefs of the future, and could indicate in lasting lines the meaning of the passing day.

This is the more remarkable because, woman-like, she was always more interested in persons than in purposes,—in the actors than in the actions: and while her sympathies were strong for «the people,» she hardly took count of «the State» in the abstract; the word rarely occurs in her writings. The establishment of guarantees of political liberty was what her political friends strove for; and as M. Sorel points out, this enlightened demand was not quite the same as the blind demand for civil liberty and its concomitants, which inspired the passions of the great majority of Frenchmen. It was the latter cause and not the former that was gained by the Revolution; and consequently the political interests of Madame de Staël were only a source of disappointment and suffering to her, complicated as they were with the political disgrace of her father, his unpopularity, and the oblivion into which he fell.

After the Revolution broke out, she lived for the most part at Coppet, her father's Swiss home. An object of bitter enmity first to the Directory, later to the First Consul, and afterward to Napoleon when Emperor, she was exiled from Paris from 1792 to 1814. During these years she visited England, Germany, and Italy, studying the politics of England, the literature of Germany, the art of Italy, and embodying her thorough researches in one remarkable book after another. She was one of the first in date, and is still among the first in ability, of *cosmopolitan* writers and thinkers. Her appreciation of the intellectual achievements of other lands than France was stigmatized in her own day as a lack of patriotism; and at this moment — since the German War — Madame de Staël is esteemed the less by many of her countrymen for what students consider her chief claim to honor, her recognition of the high rank to be assigned to German thought and to German men of letters. This is perhaps the best service her generous mind rendered her country; and it is a true expression of her character.

When at Coppet she was the brilliant hostess of brilliant guests; most of them celebrated men, many of them affectionate friends, many of them admiring strangers. There were often a company of thirty persons collected in the château; and frequently among them Benjamin Constant. It was when he was there that Madame de Staël's genius as a talker — and this was her greatest genius — shone most vividly and intensely. It is said that no one ever stimulated her to such marvelous achievements in conversation as he — whom she speaks of as «gifted with one of the most remarkable minds that nature ever bestowed on any man.» Nothing, Sainte-Beuve reports from those who were present, was ever so dazzling and consummate as the manner in which, hours long, they tossed the shuttlecock of thought between them, with inimitable ease and grace and gayety.

Even in her books Madame de Staël is rather a great talker than a great writer; and her writings are only rightly read when read as eager and prolonged conversations. They are not even monologues: they demand constantly the co-operation of the reader's responsive intelligence. Her habits of life are in some measure an explanation of this: they were fitted to develop a «great style» in a talker, but not in a writer. Her books were written rapidly: sometimes when she was at Coppet, she wrote surrounded by her many guests, gayly meeting all interruptions half-way; when she was traveling, she wrote «on the road.» Her writings fill seventeen octavo volumes, and the list of them mounts to some thirty numbers.

Sainte-Beuve in one of his fervent essays on Madame de Staël, remarking that as the personal remembrances of her die out, her fame rests only on her works, continues in a passage which may well be prefixed to selections from her books: —

«Her writings only are left to us; and they need to be filled out, to be explained: their greatest charm and power is when they are considered in the mass; and it is scarcely possible to detach one page from the others. The phrases even do not retain their meaning when read separately; they must not be displaced. . . . She needs more than other writers to be read with friendly, intelligent eyes. Let me take, for example, the most celebrated of her phrases, if it can be called so,— that in which her life is summed up: —‹I have always been the same: full of life and full of sadness; I have loved God, my father, and Liberty.› How emotional, how suggestive: but how elliptical! She has always been the same, ‹*vive et triste*›: but she has been many things besides, and that must be added; she does not say so. ‹*Dieu et la liberté*› is lofty, is the noblest aspiration; but ‹*mon père*› inserted there between *Dieu* and *la liberté* creates a sort of enigma, or at least is a singularity, and demands explanation. When these words were uttered by her, she was mortally ill and fading away: at that moment they must have seemed admirable, and they were so; but only when there is added to them the illumination of her look, of her expression, of her accent. Her words constantly need that to fill them out; her pen did not complete them; there lacks almost always to her written phrase some indescribable accompaniment. This is perhaps an added reason for the refined reader to delight in it: there is a pleasure in imaginatively conceiving the appropriate gesture and accent. Sensitive souls enjoy such occasions of exercising their sensitiveness.»

CLOSE OF THE INTRODUCTION TO THE TREATISE ON THE ‹INFLUENCE OF THE PASSIONS›

WHATEVER may be thought of my plan, it is certain that my only object has been to combat unhappiness in all its forms; to study the thoughts, the sentiments, the institutions, that cause suffering to men; to seek what form of reflection, action, combination, can somewhat diminish the intensity of the troubles of the soul. The image of misfortune, under whatever aspect it presents itself, pursues and overwhelms me. Alas! I have so fully experienced what it is to suffer, that an inexpressible emotion, a sad uneasiness, takes possession of me at the thought of the sorrows of all men, and of every man: the thought of their inevitable misfortunes, and of the torments of the imagination; of the reverses of the good man, and even of the remorse of the guilty; of the wounds of the heart,— the most grievous of all,— and of the regrets that are felt none the less because they are felt with shame: in short, of all which is the source of tears; tears that the ancients preserved in a consecrated vase, so august in their eyes was human grief. Ah! it is not enough to have vowed that in the precincts of one's own existence,— whatever injustice, whatever wrong, we may be the object of,— we will never voluntarily cause a moment's pain, we will never voluntarily relinquish the possibility of comforting a sorrow: the further effort must be made to strive by some ray of talent, by some power of meditation, to find the touching language that gently opens the heart, and to help in discovering the philosophic height where the weapons that wound cannot reach us.

FROM THE ‹PRELIMINARY DISCOURSE TO THE TREATISE ON LITERATURE›

Man stands in need of support from the opinions of his fellow-beings: he dares not rely entirely on the perceptions of his conscience; he distrusts his own judgment if others do not agree with him; and such is the weakness of human nature, such is its dependence on society, that a man might almost repent of his good qualities as if they were bad qualities, did public opinion unite in blaming him for them: but he has recourse, in his uneasiness, to these books,—the records of the best and noblest sentiments of all ages. If he loves liberty,—if that name of republic, so full of power in fraternal souls, is connected in his mind with images of all virtues,—his soul, cast down by contemporary events, will be uplifted by the perusal of some of the ‹Lives› of Plutarch, a Letter from Brutus to Cicero, the thoughts of Cato of Utica in the language of Addison, the reflections with which the hatred of tyranny inspired Tacitus, the emotions reported or imagined by historians and poets. A lofty character becomes content with itself if it finds itself in accord with these noble emotions, with the virtues which Imagination herself selects when portraying a model for all time. What consolations are bestowed on us by writers of high talents and lofty souls! The great men of the primal ages, if they were calumniated during their lives, had no resource save in themselves; but for us, the ‹Phædo› of Socrates, the beautiful masterpieces of eloquence, sustain our souls in times of trial. Philosophers of all countries exhort us and encourage us; and the penetrating language of the moral nature, and of intimate knowledge of the human heart, seems to address itself personally to all those whom it consoles.

How human it is, how useful it is, to attach great importance to literature — to the art of thinking!

FROM ‹DELPHINE›

LETTER OF DELPHINE TO LÉONCE

What motive could prevent me from seeing you? Léonce, no selfish emotions have power over me. God is my witness that for no possible advantages would I give up an hour, a single hour, that I could pass with you without remorse. . . .

We are very wretched. O Léonce, do you think I do not feel it? Everything seemed to unite only a few months ago to promise us the purest happiness. I was free; my position and my fortune assured me perfect independence; I had seen you; I had loved you with my whole soul: and the most fatal stroke — one that the slightest accident, the merest word, might have turned aside — has separated us forever! . . .

If it is sweet to you, Léonce, when you suffer, to think that at that moment, whenever it may be, Delphine, your poor friend, overwhelmed by her sorrows, implores Heaven for power to bear them,— the Heaven which hitherto has always supported her, and which now she implores in vain,— if this idea, both cruel and sweet, can comfort you, ah! you may indulge in it at will! But what have our sorrows to do with our duties? That nobleness of life we worship in our days of happiness, is it not always the same? Shall it have less empire over us, because the moment has come to attain those heights we admired?

Fate has willed that the purest enjoyments of heart and soul should be denied us. Perhaps, my friend, Providence has thought us worthy of that which is noblest in the world,— the sacrifice of love to duty. . . .

What still depends on us is to command our actions: our happiness is no longer in our power; we must trust that to the care of Heaven: after many struggles, God will give us at least calmness,— yes, at least calmness. . . . Let us strive to lead a life of devotion to others, a life of sacrifices and of duties; such a life has given almost happiness to virtuous souls.

M. DE SERBELLANE (*in conversation*)

"One can still make serviceable for the happiness of others a life that promises ourselves only pain; and this hope will give you the courage to live."

FROM ‹CORINNE›

The following day, the same company* again assembled at her house; and to interest her in conversation, Lord Nelvil turned the talk to Italian literature, and excited her natural animation by affirming that England possessed a greater number of true poets than all those of which Italy could boast,—poets superior in strength and delicacy of feeling.

"In the first place," answered Corinne, "foreigners only know, for the most part, our poets of the highest rank,—Dante, Petrarch, Ariosto, Guarini, Tasso, and Metastasio; while we have a number of others, such as Chiabrera, Guidi, Filicaja, Parini, etc., —without counting Sannazaro, Politian, etc., who have written admirably in Latin. All these poets, with more or less talent, know how to bring the marvels of the fine arts, and of nature, into the pictures created by words. Undoubtedly there is not in our poets that profound melancholy, that knowledge of the human heart, that characterizes yours; but does not this kind of superiority belong rather to philosophical writers than to poets? The brilliant melodiousness of the Italian language is better suited to express the splendor of external objects than the moods of meditation. Our language is more adapted to depict passion than sadness, because the sentiments of reflection demand more metaphysical expressions than it possesses." . . .

"Undoubtedly," answered Lord Nelvil, "you explain as well as possible both the beauties and the deficiencies of your poetry; but when these deficiencies, without the beauties, are perceived in prose, how will you defend them? What is only vagueness in poetry becomes emptiness in prose; and this crowd of commonplace ideas that your poets know how to embellish by the melodious and the imaginative qualities of their language, reappears unveiled in prose with wearisome vividness. The greater part of your prose writers, to-day, use a language so declamatory, so diffuse, so abounding in superlatives, that one would say they all wrote by command with every-day phrases, and for an artificial intelligence: they seem not to suspect that to write is to express one's personal character and one's own thought." . . .

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* The principal personages were Lord Nelvil and Mr. Edgermond, Englishmen; the Count d'Erfeuil, a Frenchman; and the Prince Castel-Forte, an Italian. Corinne was an Italian.

"You forget," Corinne eagerly interrupted, "first Machiavelli and Boccaccio; then Gravina, Filangieri; and in our own day, Cesarotti, Verri, Bettinelli, and so many others who know how to write and to think. But I agree with you that during these last centuries, unfortunate circumstances having deprived Italy of her independence, her people have lost all interest in truth, and often even the possibility of uttering it. From this has resulted the habit of taking pleasure in words, without daring to approach ideas. . . . When prose writers have no sort of influence on the happiness of a nation, when men write only to become conspicuous, when the means is substituted for the end,—a thousand steps are taken, but nothing is attained. . . . Besides, southern nations are constrained by prose, and depict their true feelings only in verse. It is not the same with French literature," she added, addressing Count d'Erfeuil: "your prose writers are often more poetic than your poets."

"It is true," replied Count d'Erfeuil, "that we have in this style true classical authorities: Bossuet, La Bruyère, Montesquieu, Buffon, cannot be surpassed. . . . These perfect models should be imitated as far as possible by foreigners as well as by ourselves."

"It is difficult for me to believe," answered Corinne, "that it would be desirable for the whole world to lose all national color, all originality of heart and mind; and I venture to say that even in your country, Count d'Erfeuil, this literary orthodoxy, if I may so call it, which is opposed to all happy innovation, would in the long run render your literature very sterile." . . .

"Would you desire, fair lady," answered the count, "that we should admit among us the barbarisms of the Germans, the 'Night Thoughts' of the English Young, the *concetti* of the Italians and the Spaniards? What would become of the truthfulness, the elegance, of the French style, after such a mixture?"

Prince Castel-Forte, who had not yet spoken, said: "It seems to me we all have need of each other: the literature of each country opens, to one familiar with it, a new sphere of ideas. The Emperor Charles V. said that a man who knows four languages is four men. If this great political genius so judged in regard to affairs, how much truer it is as regards letters! All foreigners know French, and so their point of view is more extensive than that of Frenchmen who do not know foreign languages." . . .

"You will at least acknowledge," answered the count, "that there is one matter in which we have nothing to learn from any one. Our theatrical works are certainly the first in Europe; for I do not think that even the English themselves would dream of opposing Shakespeare to us."

"I beg your pardon," interrupted Mr. Edgermond: "they do imagine that."

"Then I have nothing to say," continued Count d'Erfeuil with a smile of gracious disdain. "Every man may think what he will: but still I persist in believing that it may be affirmed without presumption that we are the first in the dramatic art; and as to the Italians, if I may be allowed to speak frankly, they do not even suspect that there is such a thing as dramatic art. The music of a play is everything with them, and what is spoken, nothing. If the second act of a play has better music than the first, they begin with the second act; if they like two first acts of two different pieces, they play these two acts the same day, and put between the two one act of a prose comedy. . . . The Italians are accustomed to consider the theatre as a great drawing-room, where people listen only to the songs and the ballet. I say rightly, where *they listen to the ballet*, for it is only when that begins that there is silence in the theatre; and this ballet is a masterpiece of bad taste." . . .

"All you say is true," answered Prince Castel-Forte gently: "but you have spoken only of music and dancing; and in no country are those considered dramatic art."

"It is much worse," interrupted Count d'Erfeuil, "when tragedies are represented: more horrors are brought together in five acts than the imagination could conceive. . . . The tragedians are perfectly in harmony with the coldness and extravagance of the plays. They all perform these terrible deeds with the greatest calmness. When an actor becomes excited, they say that he appears like a preacher; for in truth there is much more animation in the pulpit than on the stage. . . . There is no better comedy than tragedy in Italy. . . . The only comic style that really belongs to Italy is the harlequinades: a valet, who is a rascal, a glutton, and a coward, and an old guardian who is a dupe, a miser, and in love,—that's the whole subject of these plays. . . . You will agree that 'Tartuffe' and 'The Misanthrope' imply a little more genius."

This attack from Count d'Erfeuil greatly displeased the Italians who were listening to it, but yet they laughed; and Count d'Erfeuil in conversation liked better to display wit than courtesy. . . . Prince Castel-Forte, and other Italians who were there, were impatient to refute Count d'Erfeuil, but they thought their cause better defended by Corinne than by any one else; and as the pleasure of shining in conversation scarcely tempted them, they begged Corinne to make reply, and contented themselves with only citing the well-known names of Maffei, Metastasio, Goldoni, Alfieri, Monti.

Corinne at once agreed that the Italians had no great body of dramatic works; but she was ready to prove that circumstances and not lack of talent were the cause of this. The play-writing which is based on the observation of society, can exist only in a country where the writer lives habitually in the centre of a populous and brilliant world: in Italy there are only violent passions or lazy enjoyments. . . . But the play-writing that is based on the unreal, that springs from the imagination, and adapts itself to all times as to all countries, was born in Italy.

The observation of the human heart is an inexhaustible source for literature; but the nations who are more inclined to poetry than to reflection give themselves up rather to the intoxication of joy than to philosophic irony. There is something, at bottom, sad in the humor that is based on knowledge of men: true gayety is the gayety of the imagination only. It is not that Italians do not ably study men with whom they have to deal; and they discover more delicately than any others the most secret thoughts: but it is as a method of action that they have this talent, and they are not in the habit of making a literary use of it. . . . One can see in Machiavelli what terrible knowledge of the human heart the Italians are capable of: but from such depths comedy does not spring; and the leisureliness of society, properly so called, can alone teach how to depict men on the comic stage. . . .

The true character of Italian gayety is not derision, it is fancy; it is not the painting of manners, but poetic extravagances. It is Ariosto and not Molière who has the power to amuse Italy. . . . But to know with certainty what comedy and tragedy might attain to in Italy, there is need that there should be somewhere a theatre and actors. The multitude of little cities who all choose to have a theatre, waste by dispersing them the few resources that could be collected. . . .

These different ideas and many others were brilliantly developed by Corinne. She understood extremely well the rapid art of light talk, which insists on nothing; and the business of pleasing, which brings forward each talker in turn. . . .

Mr. Edgermond had so eager a desire to know what she thought about tragedy, that he ventured to speak to her on this subject. «Madam,» he said, «what seems to me especially lacking in Italian literature are tragedies: it seems to me there is less difference between children and men than between your tragedies and ours. . . . Is not this true, Lord Nelvil?»

«I think entirely with you,» answered Oswald. «Metastasio, who is famed as the poet of love, gives to this passion, in whatever country, in whatever situation he represents it, precisely the same color. . . . It is impossible for us who possess Shakespeare — the poet who has most deeply sounded the history and the passions of man — to endure the two couples of lovers who divide between them almost all the plays of Metastasio. . . . With profound respect for the character of Alfieri, I shall permit myself to make some criticisms on his plays. Their aim is so noble, the sentiments that the author expresses are so in accord with his personal conduct, that his tragedies must always be praised as actions, even when criticized in some respects as literary works. But it seems to me that some of his tragedies have as much monotony of strength as Metastasio has monotony of sweetness.» . . .

«My lord,» said Corinne, «I am of your opinion almost entirely; but I would offer some exceptions to your observations. It is true that Metastasio is more a lyrical than a dramatic poet. . . . By force of writing amorous verses, there has been created among us a conventional language in this direction; and it is not what the poet has felt, but what he has read, that serves for his inspiration. . . . In general, our literature but little expresses our character and our modes of life. . . .

«Alfieri, by a singular chance, was, so to speak, transplanted from antiquity into modern days: he was born to act, and he was able only to write. . . . He desired to accomplish through literature a political purpose: this purpose was undoubtedly the noblest of all; but no matter: nothing so distorts works of imagination as to have a purpose. . . . Although the French mind and that of Alfieri have not the least analogy, they are alike in this, that both carry their own contours into all the subjects of which they treat.»

Count d'Erfeuil, hearing the French mind spoken of, entered again into the conversation. «It would be impossible for us,» he said, «to endure on the stage the inconsequences of the Greeks, or the monstrosities of Shakespeare: the taste of the French is too pure for that. . . . It would be to plunge us into barbarism, to wish to introduce anything foreign among us."

"You would do well, then," said Corinne, smiling, "to surround yourselves with the great wall of China. There are assuredly rare beauties in your tragic authors; perhaps new ones would develop among them if you sometimes permitted to be shown you on the stage something not French, . . . the 'Merope' of Maffei, the 'Saul' of Alfieri, the 'Aristodemo' of Monti, and above all else, the poem of Dante — though he composed no tragedy, it seems to me, capable of giving the idea of what dramatic art in Italy might be." . . .

"When Dante lived," said Oswald, "the Italians played a great political part in Europe and at home. Perhaps it is impossible for you now to have national tragedies. That such works should be produced, it is needful that great circumstances should develop in life the sentiments expressed on the stage." . . .

"It is unfortunately possible that you are right, my lord," answered Corinne; "nevertheless I always hope much for us from the natural intellectual vigor in Italy: . . . but what is especially lacking to us for tragedy are the actors; . . . yet there is no language in which a great actor could show as much talent as in ours." . . .

"If you would convince us of what you say," interrupted Prince Castel-Forte, "you must prove it to us: . . . give us the inexpressible pleasure of seeing you play tragedy." . . .

"Well," she replied, "we will accomplish, if you desire it, the project I have had for a long time, of playing the translation I have made of 'Romeo and Juliet.'"

"The 'Romeo and Juliet' of Shakespeare!" cried Mr. Edgermond: "you love Shakespeare!"

"As a friend," she answered; "for he knows all the secrets of grief."

"And you will play it in Italian?" he exclaimed: "ah! how fortunate we shall be to assist at such a spectacle!"

FROM ‹ON GERMANY›

GOETHE

Goethe might represent the whole body of German literature: not but that there are in it other writers superior to him in some respects, but in himself alone he unites all that distinguishes the German genius; and no one is as remarkable as he for the kind of imagination which the Italians, the English, and the French do not at all possess. . . .

When one succeeds in making Goethe talk he is admirable: his eloquence is rich with thought; his gayety is full of grace and of wisdom; his imagination is excited by external objects as was that of ancient artists; and none the less his reason has only too completely the full development of our own times. Nothing disturbs the strength of his brain; and the irregularities of his very nature — his ill-humor, his embarrassment, his constraint — pass like clouds beneath the summit of the mountain to which his genius has attained. . . .

Goethe has no longer that contagious ardor which was the inspiration of ‹Werther›; but the warmth of his thought still suffices to vivify his writings. One feels that he is no longer touched by life, — that he paints it from a distance: he attaches more value now to the pictures he presents to us than to the emotions he himself experiences; time has made of him only a spectator. When he still played an active part in scenes of passion, — when his own heart suffered, — his writings produced a more vivid impression.

As one always believes in the ideal of one's own abilities, Goethe maintains at present that the author should be calm even when he composes a passionate work, and that the artist must preserve his composure if he would act most strongly on the imagination of his readers. Perhaps he would not have held this opinion in his early youth; perhaps then he was possessed by his genius instead of being the master of it; perhaps he felt then that since what is sublime and what is divine exist but momentarily in the heart of man, the poet is inferior to the inspiration that animates him, and that he cannot criticize it without destroying it.

In first seeing him, one is astonished in finding something of coldness and of stiffness in the author of ‹Werther›; but when he

has graciously become at ease, the play of his imagination completely does away with the previous constraint. The intelligence of this man is universal, and impartial because it is universal: for there is no indifference in his impartiality. He is a double existence, a double power, a double light, which illuminates both sides of a subject simultaneously. When thinking, nothing bars his way,— neither his times, nor his forms of life, nor his personal relations: his eagle's-glance falls straight on the objects he observes. Had he had a political career, had his soul been developed by action, his character would be more decided, more firm, more patriotic; but his mind would not so freely float through the air over different points of view: passions or interests would have traced for him a definite path.

Goethe takes pleasure, in his writings and in conversation also, in breaking threads he has himself spun, in deriding emotions he has excited, in casting down statues of which he has pointed out the beauties. . . . Were he not estimable, fear would be inspired by this lofty superiority, which degrades and then exalts, is now tender and now ironical, which alternately affirms and doubts, and all with equal success.

NAPOLEON

From ‹Considerations on the French Revolution›

General Bonaparte made himself as conspicuous by his character and his intellect as by his victories; and the imagination of the French began to be touched by him [1797]. His proclamations to the Cisalpine and Ligurian republics were talked of. . . . A tone of moderation and of dignity pervaded his style, which contrasted with the revolutionary harshness of the civil rulers of France. The warrior spoke in those days like a lawgiver, while the lawgivers expressed themselves with soldier-like violence. General Bonaparte had not executed in his army the decrees against the émigrés. It was said that he loved his wife, whose character is full of sweetness; it was asserted that he felt the beauties of Ossian; it was a pleasure to attribute to him all the generous qualities that form a noble background for extraordinary abilities. . . .

Such at least was my own mood when I saw him for the first time in Paris. I could find no words with which to reply to him when he came to me to tell me that he had tried to visit my father at Coppet, and that he was sorry to have passed through Switzerland without seeing him. But when I had somewhat recovered from the agitation of admiration, it was followed by a feeling of very marked fear. Bonaparte then had no power: he was thought even to be more or less in danger from the vague suspiciousness of the Directory; so that the fear he inspired was caused only by the singular effect of his personality upon almost every one who had intercourse with him. I had seen men worthy of high respect; I had also seen ferocious men: there was nothing in the impression Bonaparte produced upon me which could remind me of men of either type. I soon perceived, on the different occasions when I met him during his stay in Paris, that his character could not be defined by the words we are accustomed to make use of: he was neither kindly nor violent, neither gentle nor cruel, after the fashion of other men. Such a being, so unlike others, could neither excite nor feel sympathy: he was more or less than man. His bearing, his mind, his language, have the marks of a foreigner's nature,—an advantage the more in subjugating Frenchmen. . . .

Far from being reassured by seeing Bonaparte often, he always intimidated me more and more. I felt vaguely that no emotional feeling could influence him. He regards a human creature as a fact or a thing, but not as an existence like his own. He feels no more hate than love. For him there is no one but himself: all other creatures are mere ciphers. The force of his will consists in the imperturbable calculations of his egotism: he is an able chess-player whose opponent is all humankind, whom he intends to checkmate. His success is due as much to the qualities he lacks as to the talents he possesses. Neither pity, nor sympathy, nor religion, nor attachment to any idea whatsoever, would have power to turn him from his path. He has the same devotion to his own interests that a good man has to virtue: if the object were noble, his persistency would be admirable.

Every time that I heard him talk, I was struck by his superiority; it was of a kind, however, that had no relation to that of men instructed and cultivated by study, or by society, such as England and France possess examples of. But his conversation indicated that quick perception of circumstances the hunter has in pursuing his prey. Sometimes he related the political and military events of his life in a very interesting manner; he had even, in narratives that admitted gayety, a touch of Italian imagination. Nothing, however, could conquer my invincible alienation from what I perceived in him. I saw in his soul a cold and cutting sword, which froze while wounding; I saw in his mind a profound irony, from which nothing fine or noble could escape, not even his own glory: for he despised the nation whose suffrages he desired; and no spark of enthusiasm mingled with his craving to astonish the human race. . . .

His face, thin and pale at that time, was very agreeable: since then he has gained flesh,—which does not become him; for one needs to believe such a man to be tormented by his own character, at all to tolerate the sufferings this character causes others. As his stature is short, and yet his waist very long, he appeared to much greater advantage on horseback than on foot; in all ways it is war, and war only, he is fitted for. His manner in society is constrained without being timid; it is disdainful when he is on his guard, and vulgar when he is at ease; his air of disdain suits him best, and so he is not sparing in the use of it. . . . He took pleasure already in the art of embarrassing people by saying disagreeable things: an art which he has since made a system of, as of all other methods of subjugating men by degrading them.

NECKER

From ‹Considerations on the French Revolution›

It is now twelve years since death separated me from my father, and every day my admiration for him has increased: the remembrance that I preserve of his mind and of his virtues serves me as a point of comparison to appreciate the worth of other men; and although I have traveled through the whole of Europe, no genius of such quality, no moral nature of such strength, has been made known to me. M. Necker might be weak from kindness, uncertain because of reflection: but when he believed duty to be involved in a determination, it seemed to him he heard the voice of God; and he listened only to that, whatever efforts might be made to affect him. I have more confidence to-day in the lightest of his words than I should have in any living person however admirable; all M. Necker has said to me is fixed as a rock in me. All that I have gained by myself may disappear; the identity of my being is in the attachment that I retain to his memory. I have loved those whom I love no more; I have esteemed those whom I esteem no more; the flood of life has swept all in its current, save this great figure, which I see on the mountain-top pointing me the life to come.

I owe no true gratitude on this earth but to God and my father: all my days had been days of struggle had not his benediction rested on them. But how much he suffered! The most brilliant prosperity had marked the first half of his life: he had become rich; he had been made first minister of France; the boundless attachment of the French nation had rewarded him for his devotion to it; during the seven years of his first retirement, his works had been placed in the first rank of those of statesmen: and perhaps he was the only man who had shown himself skilled in the art of administering a great country without ever departing from the most scrupulous morality, and even from the purest delicacy. As a religious writer he never ceased to be philosophical; as a philosophic writer he never ceased to be religious: eloquence never carried him beyond reason, and reason never deprived him of a single true impulse of eloquence. To these great advantages was united the most flattering success in society. . . .

Alas! who could have foreseen that so much admiration would be followed by so much injustice; that he who had loved France with almost too great a predilection would be reproached with having the sentiments of a foreigner; that by one party he would be called the author of the Revolution because he respected the rights of the nation, and that the leaders of this nation would accuse him of having desired to sacrifice it to the support of the monarchy? Thus, in other times, I please myself with thinking the Chancelier de l'Hospital was threatened by the Catholics and Protestants alternately; that Sully would have been seen to succumb under party hatreds, had not the firmness of his master sustained him. But neither of these two statesmen had that imagination of the heart which makes a man open to all kinds of suffering. M. Necker was calm before God, calm in the presence of death; because conscience alone speaks at that moment. But when the interests of this world still occupied him, there was not a reproach that did not wound him, not an enemy whose malevolence did not reach him, not a day in which he did not twenty times question himself: sometimes blaming himself for ills that he had not been able to prevent; sometimes going back behind events, and weighing anew the different determinations he might have made. The purest enjoyments of life were poisoned for him by the unheard-of persecutions of party spirit. This party spirit showed itself even in the manner in which émigrés in the time of their need addressed themselves to him to ask help. Many of them writing to him for this purpose, excused themselves for not going to see him, on the plea that the most important personages of their party had forbidden their doing so; they judged truly at least of the generosity of M. Necker, when they believed that this submission to the violence of their leaders would not deter him from being of use to them. . . .

After years so full of grief, so full of virtue, the power of loving seemed to increase in my father at the age when it diminishes in other men; and everything about him declared, when life ended, his return to heaven.

PERSECUTIONS BY NAPOLEON

From 'Ten Years of Exile'

In the month of March, 1811, a new Prefect [of Geneva] arrived from Paris. He was a man peculiarly adapted to the conditions of the time; that is to say, possessing a great knowledge of facts, and no principles with regard to rule, . . . and placing his conscience in devotion to power. The first time that I saw him he said to me immediately that a talent like mine was made to celebrate the Emperor,— that he was a subject worthy of the kind of enthusiasm that I had shown in 'Corinne.' I answered him, that persecuted as I had been by the Emperor, any praise on my part addressed to him would have the air of a petition; and that I was persuaded that the Emperor himself would find my eulogiums absurd in such conditions. He opposed this opinion vehemently; he came again several times to see me, to beg me (for the sake of my interests, he said) to write something for the Emperor. Were it not more than four pages, that would suffice, he assured me, to put an end to all my troubles.

And what he said to me he repeated to all my acquaintances. At last one day he came proposing that I should sing the birth of the King of Rome. I answered him, with laughter, that I had no thought to express on this subject beyond my wishes that his nurse might be a good one. This jest put an end to the prefect's negotiations with me, as to the necessity that I should write something in favor of the government.

A short time after, the physicians ordered my youngest son the baths of Aix in Savoy, twenty miles from Coppet. . . . Scarcely had I been there ten days, when a courier from the prefect of Geneva brought me orders to return home. The prefect of Mont Blanc where I was [*i. e.*, in whose prefecture she was], also was afraid, he said, that I might set off from Aix to go to England, to write against the Emperor; and although London was not very near Aix in Savoy, he sent his gendarmes over the road to forbid my being provided with post-horses. I am ready to laugh now at all this prefectorial activity directed against such an insignificant object as myself; but then I was ready to die at the sight of a gendarme. I was always fearing that from so rigorous an exile the next step might easily be a prison, more terrible to me than death. I knew that once arrested, once this scandal dared, the Emperor would permit no word to be spoken for me, had any one had the courage to attempt it,— a courage scarcely probable in his court, where terror reigns every moment of the day, and about every detail of life.

I returned to Geneva; and the prefect informed me that not only he forbade me to go under any pretext into the countries adjoining France, but that he advised me not to travel in Switzerland, and never to venture more than two leagues in any direction from Coppet. I observed to him that having my domicile in Switzerland, I did not well understand by what right a French authority could forbid my traveling in a foreign country. He thought me, undoubtedly, rather a simpleton to discuss in those days a question of right; and he repeated his advice, which was singularly akin to an order. I held to my remonstrance; but the next day I learned that one of the most distinguished men of letters of Germany, M. Schlegel, who for eight years had been good enough to take charge of the education of my sons, had just received the order not only to leave Geneva, but also

Coppet. I was desirous to represent once more that in Switzerland the prefect of Geneva could give no orders [Geneva was then under French rule]: but I was told that if I liked better that this order should come from the French ambassador, I could so have it: that this ambassador would address himself to the landamman, and the landamman to the canton de Vaud, and the authorities of the canton would turn M. Schlegel out of my house. By forcing despotism to take this roundabout way, I should have gained ten days; but nothing more. I asked to know why I was deprived of the society of M. Schlegel, my friend, and that of my children. The prefect — who was accustomed, like most of the Emperor's agents, to connect very gentle phrases with very harsh acts — told me that it was from consideration for me that the government removed from my house M. Schlegel, who made me unpatriotic. Truly touched by this paternal care on the part of the government, I inquired what M. Schlegel had done inimical to France: the prefect spoke of his literary opinions, and among other things, of a brochure by him, in which, comparing the ‹Phædra› of Euripides to that of Racine, he gave the preference to the former. It showed much delicate feeling in a monarch of Corsican birth, to take sides in this manner about the finer details of French literature. But the truth was, M. Schlegel was exiled because he was my friend, because his conversation animated my solitude; the system was beginning to be worked that was to manifest itself more clearly, of making for me a prison of my soul, by depriving me of all the enjoyments of society and of friendship.

ROME ANCIENT AND MODERN

From ‹Corinne›

One of the most singular churches in Rome is St. Paul's: its exterior is that of an ill-built barn; yet it is bedecked within by eighty pillars of such exquisite material and proportion that they are believed to have been transported from an Athenian temple described by Pausanias. If Cicero said in his day, "We are surrounded by vestiges of history," what would he say now? Columns, statues, and pictures are so prodigally crowded in the churches of modern Rome, that in St. Agnes's, bas-reliefs turned face downward serve to pave a staircase; no one troubling himself to ascertain what they might represent. How astonishing a spectacle was ancient Rome, had its treasures been left where they were found! The immortal city would be still before us nearly as it was of yore; but could the men of our day dare to enter it? The palaces of the Roman lords are vast in the extreme, and often display much architectural grace; but their interiors are rarely arranged in good taste. They have none of those elegant apartments invented elsewhere for the perfect enjoyment of social life. Superb galleries, hung with the chefs-d'œuvre of the tenth Leo's age, are abandoned to the gaze of strangers by their lazy proprietors, who retire to their own obscure little chambers, dead to the pomp of their ancestors, as were *they* to the austere virtues of the Roman republic. The country-houses give one a still greater idea of solitude, and of their owners' carelessness amid the loveliest scenes of nature. One walks immense gardens, doubting if they have a master; the grass grows in every path, yet in these very alleys are the trees cut into shapes, after the fantastic mode that once reigned in France. Strange inconsistency—this neglect of essentials and affectation in what is useless! Most Italian towns, indeed, surprise us with this mania, in a people who have constantly beneath their eyes such models of noble simplicity. They prefer glitter to convenience; and in every way betray the advantages and disadvantages of not habitually mixing with society. Their luxury is rather that of fancy than of comfort. Isolated among themselves, they dread not that spirit of ridicule, which in truth seldom penetrates the interior of Roman abodes. Contrasting this with what they appear from without, one might say that they were rather built to dazzle the peasantry than for the reception of friends.

Translation of Isabel Hill.

STATIUS

(45–96 A. D. ?)

BY WILLIAM CRANSTON LAWTON

Publius Papinius Statius, epic, lyric, and dramatic poet, was born at Naples about the middle, and died there about the end, of the first century A. D. Neither date can be fixed. His last volume of verse was published at Naples in 95. He flourished especially however at Rome, under the capricious and cruel emperor Domitian. He and Martial testify eloquently to their mutual jealousy by making no mention each of the other. Juvenal marks him as a thriftless adventurer; saying he might well have starved had not Paris, the popular actor, bought his farce. Of these things we know no more. Statius himself launched his hopes of eternal fame with his long-wrought epic on the tragical story of Thebes.

The four ponderous epics still extant, dating from the first century of our era, give us little reason to regret the loss of the numberless heavy galleons besides that have sunk into utter forgetfulness. Whether patriotically Roman in subject, like the ventures of Lucan and Silius Italicus, or rebuilt from Greek materials like Valerius Flaccus's ‹Argonautica› and Statius's ‹Thebaid,› the four survivors plainly follow the track of the stately flagship, the ‹Æneid›—but far and far astern!

For several reasons there is perhaps no passage in the poem more pleasing than the closing lines of the ‹Thebaid›:—

> After the long sea-journey my vessel hath won her the harbor.
> Shalt thou afar survive to be read, outliving thy master,
> O my ‹Thebaid,› watched for twice six years without ceasing?
> Verily Fame already has smoothed thy favoring pathway;
> Cæsar, the noble-spirited, deigns already to know thee,
> Eager is now the Italian youth to read and proclaim thee!
> Live, I pray: nor yet draw nigh to the sacred ‹Æneid›:
> Follow thou, rather, afar, and always worship her footprints.

This same repellent subject, the tale of Thebes, like «Pelops's line, and the tale of Troy divine,» had been constantly reworked since the earliest dawn of Greek poetry. Hardly one prominent incident indeed in these twelve long books—nearly ten thousand hexameter verses—can have brought a sense of pleased surprise to the jaded listener. Nor has the story of Œdipus's misfortunes, and the strife of his sons, as here set forth, any fitness or helpful application either for the Roman audience or for us. No stately or pathetic figure dominates the scene as in Sophoclean tragedy. It is simply a complicated series of harrowing mythical events, retold with much vigor of language and versification, with measureless learned digression, with much heaping-up of elaborate simile and many-sided allusive epithet,—"a tale full of sound and fury," but as for all larger ethical or artistic purport, "signifying nothing." Statius seems to have been a professional composer of epic, brought up to the art by his father,—himself a successful versifier at least, if not the great poet filial affection would make him.

Once again at least, Statius, with indomitable energy, attempted to exhaust a great cycle of Hellenic myth: to trace the whole life of Achilles, from Chiron's forest school to the lonely barrow by Sigeion. We can hardly regret that this time only eleven hundred lines have been completed, and that the young hero never even reaches Troy! It is not for these things, if at all, that Statius is now remembered; though in his own day the 'Thebaid,' at least, was straightway read book by book to admiring throngs, and became at once a text which schoolboys committed to memory.

"Statius is great," says Niebuhr, "in his little poems. These are real poetry indeed, and have the true local color. They are read with especial enjoyment if one reads them in Italy." This praise, and quite as warm words of Goethe, applied to the 'Silvæ,' or occasional pieces. There are altogether thirty-two of these. Statius boasts of the facility with which even the longest, of almost three hundred verses, was dashed off within two days. But indeed the haste has often left its marks. He was, in fact, a popular and hard-worked court poet,—and of what a court! The savage emperor Domitian, the all-powerful freedmen and other adventurers about him, even the wretched boy pets and pages, could demand the services of this ever-ready and vigorous quill. He shall sing of a curious tree, a fine statue, or a luxurious villa. An elegy is wanted for the death of a page, of a talking parrot, of a pet lion. Statius shall be ready.

The pity of it all is that we really discern poetic instinct, masculine force, earnest feeling, in the man. He must have felt such service as degradation indeed,—this busy singer of an ignoble day. When the favorite eunuch of the tyrant requires a dedicatory poem for his own curly locks, sent as an offering to an Oriental shrine, even Statius grows weary at last; and the next poem is a plaintive and sincere appeal to his wife to join him in his return to his native city, Naples, there to spend a peaceful and quiet old age. This poem to his wife, another written for the recurrence of Lucan's birthday, and especially the lyric appeal to Somnus, the god of sleep, are full of natural feeling and poetic grace.

Statius's relations with his Roman wife Claudia, and his step-daughter, seem to have been most harmonious. He himself was childless. He was probably of good social rank, and a land-owner. He was apparently cut off rather prematurely, soon after his return to Naples, while engaged on the 'Achilleis.'

The epic poems of Statius were popular throughout later antiquity, and were preserved in numerous MSS. The Renaissance caused their eclipse, by bringing to light the nobler Hellenic masterpieces. Shortly before that time, however, the genius of a far greater Italian poet gave him an immortality of fame which his own works would not have assured him.

In the LXVth canto of the 'Commedia,' the living Dante and his ghostly guide, Virgil, already nearing the summit of the Purgatorial mountain, are joined by another shade, a heavenward pilgrim. In answer to Virgil's inquiries he tells them:—

«Statius the people name me still on earth.
I sang of Thebes, and then of great Achilles;
But on the way fell with my second burden.»

At once he adds his indebtedness for all his inspiration to the 'Æneid':—

«And to have lived upon the earth what time
Virgilius lived, I would accept one sun
More than I must ere issuing from my ban.»

That is, not to have known his master in the flesh is the deepest regret even of the disembodied soul, and worse than a year of the grievous purifying agony just escaped. There are few more entrancing scenes in all the shining leaves of the 'Commedia' than the Imaginary Conversation that ensues among these three poets, who could never have met in our world. Dante shows, through Virgil's lips, real knowledge and admiration of the 'Thebaid.'

Most readers of the 'Commedia' will doubtless agree that there is much of chance, and sometimes of afterthought, in the fate and abode assigned by Dante to various departed spirits. He had by this time been engaged long upon the poem that was still to make him meagre for so many a year. Something had now called Statius especially to his attention, and he realized that the courtly singer had been omitted — when less prominent poets were named — from Homer's company of sinless pagans in Limbo. But now, in the Purgatorio, only Christians could be met.

Then arose in Dante's imagination — for there appears to be no such hint in Statius's works, nor in tradition elsewhere — the fancy that in his last days the poet of the ‹Thebaid› was converted to the new faith. In magnificent verses Statius assures Virgil that it was through the famous fourth Eclogue that his soul was first aroused to its earnest and successful quest for highest truth. Hence his double gratitude to Virgil, his guide to poetry and also to salvation.

> «Thou first directedst me
> Towards Parnassus, in its grots to drink,
> And first concerning God didst me enlighten.
> Thou didst as he who walketh in the night,
> Who bears his light behind, which helps him not,
> But wary makes the persons after him,
> When thou didst say: ‹The age renews itself,
> Justice returns, and man's primeval time,
> And a new progeny descends from heaven.›
> Through thee I Poet was, through thee a Christian.»

Statius's ‹Thebaid› has been several times translated into English verse. Pope's version of Book i. was, to say the least, a surprising exploit for a boy of twelve; and we can well believe that the mature poet «retouched» it a little. The ‹Silvæ› have been undeservedly neglected. The entire Teubner text of Statius, in excellent print, makes a single rather stout volume, and should be somewhat better known. *Popular* none of the courtly epic poets of the Empire can or should ever be.

William Cranston Lawton.

A ROYAL BANQUET

[A brief passage from Statius's ‹Thebaid› will suffice to illustrate the rather purposeless splendor and richness of color lavished upon the descriptions. The lover of Virgil will recognize the master's frequent influence. The English rendering is of course somewhat free at times; but both in scholarship and in metrical skill is still a surprising performance for a boy just entering his teens,— even though that boy be Alexander Pope.]

The King once more the solemn rites requires,
And bids renew the feasts, and wake the fires.
His train obey, while all the courts around
With noisy care and various tumult sound.

Embroidered purple clothes the golden beds;
This slave the floor, and that the table spreads;
A third dispels the darkness of the night,
And fills depending lamps with beams of light.
Here loaves in canisters are piled on high,
And there in flames the slaughtered victims fly.
Sublime in regal state Adrastus shone,
Stretched on rich carpets on his ivory throne;
A lofty couch receives each princely guest;
Around, at awful distance, wait the rest.
And now the King, his royal feast to grace,
Acestis calls, the guardian of his race,
Who first their youth in arts of virtue trained,
And their ripe years in modest grace maintained;
Then softly whispered in her faithful ear,
And bade his daughters at the rites appear:
When from the close apartments of the night,
The royal nymphs approach divinely bright;
Such was Diana's, such Minerva's face,—
Nor shine their beauties with superior grace,
But that in these a milder charm endears,
And less of terror in their looks appears.
As on the heroes first they cast their eyes,
O'er their fair cheeks the glowing blushes rise;
Their downcast looks a decent shame confessed,
Then on their father's rev'rend features rest.
The banquet done, the monarch gives the sign
To fill the goblet high with sparkling wine
Which Danaüs used in sacred rites of old,
With sculpture graced, and rough with rising gold;
Here to the clouds victorious Perseus flies,
Medusa seems to move her languid eyes,
And, even in gold, turns paler as she dies.
There from the chase Jove's towering eagle bears,
On golden wings, the Phrygian to the stars:
Still as he rises in th' ethereal height,
His native mountains lessen to his sight;
While all his sad companions upward gaze,
Fixed on the glorious scene in wild amaze;
And the swift hounds, affrighted as he flies,
Run to the shade, and bark against the skies.
This golden bowl with generous juice was crowned,
The first libations sprinkled on the ground.
By turns on each celestial power they call;
With Phœbus's name resounds the vaulted hall.

The courtly train, the strangers, and the rest,
Crowned with chaste laurel, and with garlands dressed,
While with rich gums the fuming altars blaze,
Salute the god in numerous hymns of praise.

TO MY WIFE

AN INVITATION TO A JOURNEY

From the ‹Silvæ›

Why, what then ails my sweetest wife,
To sigh all night, and mope all day?
I know thee true to me, my life!
No wanton shaft hath found its way
To that pure heart, and shall not so;
I scorn thee, Nemesis, while I say't!
To war, to sea, had I to go,
For twenty years my love would wait,
And send a thousand suitors hence.
She ne'er would stoop her web to ravel,
But shut her doors without pretense,
And calmly bid the rascals travel!
Why then this grieved and lofty look,
Because the impulse cometh to me
To seek our childhood's pious nook
And lay my bones in ancient Cumæ?
Take heart! Thou ne'er wert one of those
Possessed by Circe, or a madness
For those accursed theatric shows;
But honor, peace, and sober gladness
Content thee well. And do but think
How light the voyage we take! Though truly
Thine is a soul which would not shrink
From the dark shores of western Thule,
The horrors of the icy North,
Or seven-mouthed Nile's mysterious sources,
If once the fiat had gone forth
That doomed *me* to such distant courses.
Venus be praised, my early love
Is mine as well, in life's decline!
The chains I wear, nor would remove,
But gladly sport, are thine, dear — thine!
Thine, when I won the Alban crown,
And Cæsar's blessèd gold was earning,

The wreathèd arms about me thrown,
   The panting kiss, my own returning;
And thine, on Capitolian mount,—
   Worsted with me, in contest fateful,—
Wrath on my slighted lyre's account
   And keen reproach to Jove ungrateful;
The nights that wakeful thou hast lain
   No stammering note of mine to miss;
And all the years of cheerful pain
   Thou livedst with me, my Thebaïs!
Who else, when late the darksome grave
   Had all but claimed me, and the roar
Was in my ears of Lethe's wave,
   My foot upon the utmost shore,
Had stood, like thee, with eyes so sad
   The imminent doom confronting? Lo,
Thy grief it was the end forbade:
   The great gods dared not face thy woe.
And wilt thou then, who once with me
   Such way hast trod, decline to share
A brief sail on a smiling sea?
   Why! where's thy far-famed courage? Where
Thy likeness to the dames of Greece
   And Latium in heroic ages?
Love's reckless. Had it chanced to please
   The most astute of married sages
To set up housekeeping in Troy,
   Penelope had gone there gayly!
Sure as desertion slew the joy
   Of Melibœa, Ægiale. . . .
Come then to fair Parthenope!
   For when that nymph,—Apollo guiding,—
With Venus's team traversed the sea,
   She found a place of sweet abiding.
And I, who after all, am not
   Either a Lydian or a Thracian,
Will choose for thee some happy spot,
   Some soft sea-lapped and sheltered station,
In summer cool, in winter mild;
   Where days go by in easeful quiet,
And nights in slumber sweet beguiled.
   No echo of the Forum's riot
Shall enter there, nor dismal strife
   Of wrangling courts; but he's the victor

Who lives, unforced, the noblest life,
And keeps the peace without a lictor!
Who cares, I say, for all the splendor
That glads the eye in golden Rome?
Vistas of columns without end, or
Park, temple, portico and dome?
Seats in the theatre's shady half,
Or five-year Capitolian contest?
Menander's blend of Grecian chaff
With Roman feeling, fair and honest?
Nor need we lack diversions here:
There's Baiæ, by her summer ocean;
The Sibyl's mystic mount is near,
Predestined goal of pious Trojan;
The slopes of Gaurus gush with wine,
While yonder, rival of the moon,
A Pharos flings across the brine,
For sailor's cheer, its radiant boon;
Long on Sorrento's lovely hills
Hath Pollius grown a vintage brave;
Dear are Ænaria's healing rills,
And Stabiæ risen from its grave.

But why our common country's charms
Retell? Enough, dear wife, to say
She bore me for thy tender arms,
To be thy comrade many a day.
And shall the mother of us both
Be slighted thus? A truce to teasing!
Thou comest, love, and nothing loth;
I see thee so thy speed increasing,
Mayhap thou'lt e'en arrive before me!
Nay, without me, I almost deem
The stately Roman homes would bore thee,
And even Tiber's lordly stream!

Translated for ‹A Library of the World's Best Literature› by Harriet Waters Preston

TO SLEEP

From the ‹Silvæ›

How have I sinned, and lost alone thy grace,
O young and very gentle god of Sleep?
Still are the trees, the fields, the woodland ways,
Drowsy the nodding tree-tops. Even the deep
Roar of the rushing river muffled seems,
While, shorn of all his violence, the sea
Leans on the land's broad bosom, sunk in dreams.
Yet now, seven times, the moon hath looked on me
Languishing; and the stars of eve and morn
Their lamps relit; while heedless of my pain
Aurora passes in half-pitying scorn,
Nor lays her cooling touch upon my brain.
Were I as Argus, and my thousand eyes
Alternate veiled, nor ever all awake,
'Twere well. But now the heart within me dies.
Is there not somewhere one who, for the sake
Of girlish arms all night about him thrown,
Would fain repel thee, Sleep? Oh, leave him so
And visit me! Yet shed not all thy down
On these poor lids, which cannot hope to know
The dreamless rest of the untroubled clown;
But lean, and touch me with thy wand, and go!

Translated for ‹A Library of the World's Best Literature› by Harriet Waters Preston

SATURNALIA

From the ‹Silvæ›

Hence, Pallas grave, and Sire Apollo!
And let the attendant Muses follow!
Your fêtes be holden far away,
Nor hither come ere New Year's day.
But aid me, Saturn, loose of gait,
December with new wine elate,
And saline jest, and laughter free,
To sing our Cæsar's jubilee,—
A day of sport, a night of revel!

Aurora scarce had cleared the level
Of the horizon, on a morn
Dewless and bright as e'er was born,

When canvas whitened all the plain,
And showers of dainties fell like rain:
Huge Pontic nuts, and noble spoil
Of wild Idumea's mountain soil;
The sun-baked figs of fiery Caunus
And damson plums descended on us,
With cakes and cheeses of the fairies,
And the sweet curd of Umbrian dairies,
And spicy loaves, bay-flavored, and
Plump dates dispensed with open hand!
Not Hyas's weeping sisterhood
E'er deluged earth with such a flood;
Nor such, when wintrier stars prevail,
The flurry of sun-smitten hail
To folk who view the Latin play.
But let the tempests have their way
If but this homely Jove of ours
Deny us not his toothsome showers!
Till now each busy booth and tent
Receives a fuller complement
Of stately folk in garments fine,
Who, mid the flow of watered wine,
Their costlier viands bring to light,
Their baskets full, and napery white,—
For gods who feast on Ida, meet.

If thou, whom all the nations greet
As harvest-giver,—nor alone
The toga'd race thy sceptre own,—
Annona, scorn our festival,
When I on hoary Eld will call
To answer if the golden prime
Excelled in aught this happy time;
If crops were ever more abundant
Than now, or vintage more redundant;
Or if, at any time, the classes
Were ever friendlier with the masses,—
Churl, knight, and senator, man and woman
All gorging at a table common!
Nay,—if it be not too audacious
To name the thing,—our sovereign gracious
Himself hath found a sitting here,
Thrice welcome to the boundless cheer;
And many a pauper felt the pride
Of feasting once at Cæsar's side!

Curious, to stand aloof, and see
How works this novel luxury:
In fiery spurts of virile passion,
Or strifes, in Amazonian fashion,
As if by Tanaïs's banks engaged,
Or shores of savage Thasis waged.

But now the folk of puny stature,
All bossed and bowed, the sport of nature,
Enter in line, our gifts partake,
And then a mutual onslaught make
With fists of so diminutive size
That Mars and Valor in the skies
Explode with laughter; while the cranes
Who wait our festival's remains,
Awhile oblivious of their plunder,
Observe the fray in silent wonder.
As day declines, impulsive charges
Are made upon a lavish largess.
Light ladies enter on the scene,
With whoso walks the stage's queen,
For beauty or for art renowned.
The players' pompous lines are drowned
By cymbals beaten to the whirls
Of Syrian and Spanish girls,
While one there is outvies the dancer,—
To wit, that humble necromancer
Who changes, by mysterious passes,
Sulphur to gold, in shivered glasses.
Amid these various junketings,
A sudden flight of wingèd things
Obscures the firmament. Captives, they,
The rain-beset Numidian's prey,
Or snared beside the Euxine sea,
Or sacred Nile. Incontinently
The seats are cleared, the chase begins,
And soon the wealth of him who wins
His bulging *sinus* clear displays.
Then what a shout in Cæsar's praise—
Lord of these Saturnalia glorious—
Ascends from countless throats uproarious!
Forbidden the tribute, still they cheer,
Until the darkening atmosphere
Hath taken eve's cerulean hue;
When blazes on the startled view

A flaming orb the arena over,
And all the shadows fly to cover.
The heavens, from pole to pole, are lit,
The Gnosian* stars with pallor smit,
The privacy of night hath vanished,
And quiet flies, and sleep is banished
To drowsy cities, far remote.

Our further pranks, who will may note!
Recount our tireless banqueting,
Our large potations fitly sing!
For now, at last, o'er even me
A soft Lyæan lethargy
Prevails. I prophesy however
The day I've sung will live forever;
The memory of its hero last,
While stand the Latian mountains fast,
While Tiber flows, till Rome shall fall
And the regenerate Capitol.

Translated for ‘A Library of the World's Best Literature’ by Harriet Waters Preston

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*Cretan: the constellation of «Ariadne's Crown.»

EDMUND CLARENCE STEDMAN

(1833–)

The subtle alchemy of Time, which by imperceptible degrees transmutes youth into age, takes us often unawares, and startles us by the completion of the process which we deemed had hardly been begun. Only a few years ago, one thought of our American poets as forming two groups: that of the old men, with Whittier and Holmes as leaders of the chorus, and that of the young singers, with Mr. Stoddard, Mr. Stedman, and Mr. Aldrich in the foremost rank. Now the old poets are no more, and we realize with a sort of surprise that the young singers have in their turn become the elders. If England must now look upon Mr. Swinburne as an undoubted veteran, America has a still stronger reason for viewing Mr. Stedman in the same light; for he is nearly four years the senior of his English contemporary.

E. C. Stedman

Edmund Clarence Stedman was born in Hartford, Connecticut, on the 8th of October, 1833. He entered Yale in 1849, but did not remain with his class to the end. In 1852 he took up the profession of journalism, and followed it with varying fortunes, first in the country, afterwards in New York, for twelve years. During the first period of the Civil War, he acted as a newspaper correspondent from Washington and the Army of the Potomac. In 1864 he obtained a seat in the New York Stock Exchange, and has since that time doubled the pursuit of literature with the life of a man of active affairs. His home was in the city of New York until 1896, when he removed his household gods to the quiet suburb of Bronxville, where he now resides.

Mr. Stedman's first published volume was the 'Poems, Lyric, and Idyllic' of 1860. This was followed by 'Alice of Monmouth and Other Poems' (1864), 'The Blameless Prince and Other Poems' (1869), and 'Hawthorne and Other Poems' (1877). The contents of these four volumes were brought together in a 'Household Edition,' published in 1884 in a single volume. Meanwhile, he had been devoting a growing amount of attention to critical work, which bore fruit in two important volumes,—'The Victorian Poets' (1875), and 'The Poets of America' (1886). In 1892, a third volume was added to this section of his works in the shape of the course of lectures on 'The Nature and Elements of Poetry' with which he had, in the year preceding, inaugurated the Percy Turnbull memorial lectureship at the Johns Hopkins University. In the present year (1897) he has published as 'Poems Now First Collected' the verse that has accumulated since the appearance of the 'Household Edition.' A few words about his activity as an editor and commentator will complete this account of his more important work, although a number of minor publications have been left unmentioned. From 1888 to 1890 he was engaged, in collaboration with Miss Ellen M. Hutchinson, in preparing 'A Library of American Literature' in eleven volumes; a work so thoroughly and so conscientiously done, it may be said in passing, that it is not likely to have a rival. In 1895 he brought out, in connection with Professor G. E. Woodberry, the much-needed complete edition of Poe, supplying careful notes and extensive critical essays. In that year also he published his judiciously chosen 'Victorian Anthology,' which will be followed before long by an 'American Anthology' upon a similar plan.

As a poet, Mr. Stedman occupies a very high place in our literature. His earlier work had suggestions of the things he most loved, —of the Tennysonian idyl, the Landorian cameo, the delicate trifling and the «occasional» felicity of Holmes or Mr. Dobson; but it soon became evident that his essential utterance was to be his own, and the expression of a strong alert individuality. Some of his poems—such as 'How Old Brown Took Harper's Ferry,' 'Pan in Wall Street,' and 'Wanted—A Man'—are among the most familiar productions of American authorship. During the dark days of the war he devoted many a well-remembered and fervently patriotic strain to the cause of the Union. And since then, upon many a celebration of civic or social interest, he has expressed the dominant ideas and emotions of the occasion in rarely felicitous numbers. His voice has been raised in behalf of many a noble cause; and we find him thirty years ago pleading for both Crete and Cuba, then as now struggling to be free. The quality of his genius is mainly lyrical, and his poetical utterance that of an eager clear-sighted spirit, responsive to both natural impressions and the appeal of culture, and finely attuned to all the complex life of the modern world. As a critic, he is in the highest degree suggestive and helpful. His sense of the beautiful in literature is almost unerring, and he stimulates the reader to share in his own raptures. His three volumes of criticism constitute the most important body of opinion that has yet been produced by any one man on the subject of modern English poetry. Other critics have given us purple patches of such discussion; Mr. Stedman alone has woven a continuous web. And his critical writing combines, in nice adjustment, the two elements that are usually represented by different men. It is at once academic in its deference to the recognized æsthetic standards, and subjective in its revelation of the play of poetry upon a receptive and sympathetic mind,— thus escaping formalism upon the one hand, and inconclusiveness upon the other. It need hardly be added that the mind thus trained in both the composition and the criticism of literature brings almost ideal qualifications to the tasks of editor and anthologist, and that Mr. Stedman's work in these fields is no unimportant part of his great services to literature.

A more indirect service to the same cause may be made the subject of this closing word. The younger generation of American writers owe Mr. Stedman a debt that is not wholly accounted for by the enumeration of his books. Busy as the exigencies of his twofold life have kept him, he has never been too busy to extend sympathy and the helping hand of personal criticism and counsel to those who have come to him for aid. He has thus given of himself so freely and so generously that it must have proved in the aggregate a heavy tax upon his energies. But he has the reward of knowing that the tribute paid him as poet and critic by his readers is, to an exceptional degree, mingled with the tribute of the personal gratitude that they feel for him as counselor and friend.

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THE HAND OF LINCOLN

LOOK on this cast, and know the hand
That bore a nation in its hold;
From this mute witness understand
What Lincoln was,— how large of mold;

The man who sped the woodman's team,
And deepest sunk the plowman's share,
And pushed the laden raft astream,
Of fate before him unaware.

This was the hand that knew to swing
The axe,— since thus would Freedom train

Her son,—and made the forest ring,
And drove the wedge, and toiled amain.

Firm hand, that loftier office took,
A conscious leader's will obeyed,
And when men sought his word and look,
With steadfast might the gathering swayed.

No courtier's, toying with a sword,
Nor minstrel's, laid across a lute;
A chief's, uplifted to the Lord
When all the kings of earth were mute!

The hand of Anak, sinewed strong,
The fingers that on greatness clutch;
Yet, lo! the marks their lines along
Of one who strove and suffered much.

For here in knotted cord and vein
I trace the varying chart of years;
I know the troubled heart, the strain,
The weight of Atlas—and the tears.

Again I see the patient brow
That palm erewhile was wont to press;
And now 'tis furrowed deep, and now
Made smooth with hope and tenderness.

For something of a formless grace
This molded outline plays about;
A pitying flame, beyond our trace,
Breathes like a spirit, in and out,—

The love that cast an aureole
Round one who, longer to endure,
Called mirth to ease his ceaseless dole,
Yet kept his nobler purpose sure.

Lo, as I gaze, the statured man,
Built up from yon large hand, appears;
A type that Nature wills to plan
But once in all a people's years.

What better than this voiceless cast
To tell of such a one as he,
Since through its living semblance passed
The thought that bade a race be free!

PROVENÇAL LOVERS—AUCASSIN AND NICOLETTE

Within the garden of Beaucaire
He met her by a secret stair,—
The night was centuries ago.
Said Aucassin, «My love, my pet,
These old confessors vex me so!
They threaten all the pains of hell
Unless I give you up, ma belle,»—
Said Aucassin to Nicolette.

«Now, who should there in heaven be
To fill your place, ma très-douce mie?
To reach that spot I little care!
There all the droning priests are met;
All the old cripples, too, are there
That unto shrines and altars cling
To filch the Peter-pence we bring,»—
Said Aucassin to Nicolette.

«There are the barefoot monks and friars
With gowns well tattered by the briars,
The saints who lift their eyes and whine:
I like them not—a starveling set!
Who'd care with folk like these to dine?
The other road 'twere just as well
That you and I should take, ma belle!»—
Said Aucassin to Nicolette.

«To Purgatory I would go
With pleasant comrades whom we know:
Fair scholars, minstrels, lusty knights
Whose deeds the land will not forget,
The captains of a hundred fights,
The men of valor and degree,—
We'll join that gallant company,»
Said Aucassin to Nicolette.

«There, too, are jousts and joyance rare,
And beauteous ladies debonair,
The pretty dames, the merry brides,
Who with their wedded lords coquette
And have a friend or two besides,—
And all in gold and trappings gay,
With furs, and crests in vair and gray,»—
Said Aucassin to Nicolette.

"Sweet players on the cithern strings,
And they who roam the world like kings,
Are gathered there, so blithe and free!
   Pardie! I'd join them now, my pet,
If you went also, ma douce mie!
The joys of heaven I'd forego
To have you with me there below,"—
   Said Aucassin to Nicolette.

ARIEL

In Memory of Percy Bysshe Shelley: Born on the Fourth of August, A. D. 1792

Wert thou on earth to-day, immortal one,
   How wouldst thou, in the starlight of thine eld,
The likeness of that morntide look upon
      Which men beheld?
How might it move thee, imaged in time's glass,
      As when the tomb has kept
   Unchanged the face of one who slept
Too soon, yet molders not, though seasons come and pass?

Has Death a wont to stay the soul no less?
   And art thou still what Shelley was erewhile?—
A feeling born of music's restlessness—
      A child's swift smile
Between its sobs—a wandering mist that rose
      At dawn—a cloud that hung
   The Euganéan hills among;
Thy voice, a wind-harp's strain in some enchanted close?

Thyself the wild west wind, O boy divine,
   Thou fain wouldst be—the spirit which in its breath
Wooes yet the seaward ilex and the pine
      That wept thy death?
Or art thou still the incarnate child of song
      Who gazed, as if astray
   From some uncharted stellar way,
With eyes of wonder at our world of grief and wrong?

Yet thou wast Nature's prodigal; the last
   Unto whose lips her beauteous mouth she bent
An instant, ere thy kinsmen, fading fast,
      Their lorn way went.

What though the faun and oread had fled?
A tenantry thine own,
Peopling their leafy coverts lone,
With thee still dwelt as when sweet Fancy was not dead;

Not dead as now, when we the visionless,
In Nature's alchemy more woeful wise,
Say that no thought of us her depths possess,—
No love, her skies.
Not ours to parley with the whispering June,
The genii of the wood,
The shapes that lurk in solitude,
The cloud, the mounting lark, the wan and waning moon.

For thee the last time Hellas tipped her hills
With beauty; India breathed her midnight moan,
Her sigh, her ecstasy of passion's thrills,
To thee alone.
Such rapture thine, and the supremer gift
Which can the minstrel raise
Above the myrtle and the bays,
To watch the sea of pain whereon our galleys drift.

Therefrom arose with thee that lyric cry,
Sad cadence of the disillusioned soul
That asks of heaven and earth its destiny,—
Or joy or dole.
Wild requiem of the heart whose vibratings,
With laughter fraught, and tears,
Beat through the century's dying years, [wings.
While for one more dark round the old Earth plumes her

No answer came to thee; from ether fell
No voice, no radiant beam: and in thy youth
How were it else, when still the oracle
Withholds its truth?
We sit in judgment; we above thy page
Judge thee and such as thee,—
Pale heralds, sped too soon to see
The marvels of our late yet unanointed age!

The slaves of air and light obeyed afar
Thy summons, Ariel; their elf-horns wound
Strange notes which all uncapturable are
Of broken sound.

That music thou alone couldst rightly hear
(O rare impressionist!)
And mimic. Therefore still we list
To its ethereal fall in this thy cyclic year.

Be then the poet's poet still! for none
Of them whose minstrelsy the stars have blessed
Has from expression's wonderland so won
The unexpressed,—
So wrought the charm of its elusive note
On us, who yearn in vain
To mock the pæan and the plain
Of tides that rise and fall with sweet mysterious rote.

Was it not well that the prophetic few,
So long inheritors of that high verse,
Dwelt in the mount alone, and haply knew
What stars rehearse?
But now with foolish cry the multitude
Awards at last the throne,
And claims thy cloudland for its own
With voices all untuned to thy melodious mood.

What joy it was to haunt some antique shade
Lone as thine echo, and to wreak my youth
Upon thy song,—to feel the throbs which made
Thy bliss, thy ruth,—
And thrill I knew not why, and dare to feel
Myself an heir unknown
To lands the poet treads alone
Ere to his soul the gods their presence quite reveal!

Even then, like thee, I vowed to dedicate
My powers to beauty; ay, but thou didst keep
The vow, whilst I knew not the afterweight
That poets weep,
The burthen under which one needs must bow,
The rude years envying
My voice the notes it fain would sing
For men belike to hear, as still they hear thee now.

Oh, the swift wind, the unrelenting sea!
They loved thee, yet they lured thee unaware
To be their spoil, lest alien skies to thee
Should seem more fair;

They had their will of thee, yet aye forlorn
Mourned the lithe soul's escape,
And gave the strand thy mortal shape
To be resolved in flame whereof its life was born.

Afloat on tropic waves, I yield once more
In age that heart of youth unto thy spell.
The century wanes,— thy voice thrills as of yore
When first it fell.
Would that I too, so had I sung a lay
The least upborne of thine,
Had shared thy pain! Not so divine
Our light, as faith to chant the far auroral day.

MORS BENEFICA

Give me to die unwitting of the day,
And stricken in Life's brave heat, with senses clear:
Not swathed and couched until the lines appear
Of Death's wan mask upon this withering clay,
But as that Old Man Eloquent made way
From Earth, a nation's conclave hushed anear;
Or as the chief whose fates, that he may hear
The victory, one glorious moment stay.
Or, if not thus, then with no cry in vain,
No ministrant beside to ward and weep,
Hand upon helm I would my quittance gain
In some wild turmoil of the waters deep,
And sink content into a dreamless sleep
(Spared grave and shroud) below the ancient main.

TOUJOURS AMOUR

Prithee tell me, Dimple-Chin,
At what age does love begin?
Your blue eyes have scarcely seen
Summers three, my fairy queen,
But a miracle of sweets,
Soft approaches, sly retreats,
Show the little archer there,
Hidden in your pretty hair:
When didst learn a heart to win?
Prithee tell me, Dimple-Chin!

«Oh!» the rosy lips reply,
«I can't tell you if I try.
'Tis so long I can't remember:
Ask some younger lass than I!»

Tell, oh tell me, Grizzled-Face,
Do your heart and head keep pace?
When does hoary love expire,
When do frosts put out the fire?
Can its embers burn below
All that chill December snow?
Care you still soft hands to press,
Bonny heads to smooth and bless?
When does love give up the chase?
Tell, oh tell me, Grizzled-Face!

«Ah!» the wise old lips reply,
«Youth may pass and strength may die;
But of love I can't foretoken:
Ask some older sage than I!»

PAN IN WALL STREET

Just where the Treasury's marble front
Looks over Wall Street's mingled nations;
Where Jews and Gentiles most are wont
To throng for trade and last quotations;
Where, hour by hour, the rates of gold
Outrival, in the ears of people,
The quarter-chimes, serenely tolled
From Trinity's undaunted steeple,—

Even there I heard a strange, wild strain
Sound high above the modern clamor,
Above the cries of greed and gain,
The curbstone war, the auction's hammer:
And swift, on Music's misty ways,
It led, from all this strife for millions,
To ancient, sweet-do-nothing days
Among the kirtle-robed Sicilians.

And as it stilled the multitude,
And yet more joyous rose, and shriller,
I saw the minstrel, where he stood
At ease against a Doric pillar:

One hand a droning organ played,
The other held a Pan's-pipe (fashioned
Like those of old) to lips that made
The reeds give out that strain impassioned.

'Twas Pan himself had wandered here
A-strolling through this sordid city,
And piping to the civic ear
The prelude of some pastoral ditty!
The demigod had crossed the seas,—
From haunts of shepherd, nymph, and satyr,
And Syracusan times,—to these
Far shores and twenty centuries later.

A ragged cap was on his head;
But—hidden thus—there was no doubting
That, all with crispy locks o'erspread,
His gnarlèd horns were somewhere sprouting;
His club-feet, cased in rusty shoes,
Were crossed, as on some frieze you see them,
And trousers, patched of divers hues,
Concealed his crooked shanks beneath them.

He filled the quivering reeds with sound,
And o'er his mouth their changes shifted,
And with his goat's-eyes looked around
Where'er the passing current drifted;
And soon, as on Trinacrian hills
The nymphs and herdsmen ran to hear him,
Even now the tradesmen from their tills,
With clerks and porters, crowded near him.

The bulls and bears together drew
From Jauncey Court and New Street Alley,
As erst, if pastorals be true,
Came beasts from every wooded valley;
The random passers stayed to list,—
A boxer Ægon, rough and merry,
A Broadway Daphnis, on his tryst
With Naïs at the Brooklyn Ferry.

A one-eyed Cyclops halted long
In tattered cloak of army pattern;
And Galatea joined the throng,—
A blowsy, apple-vending slattern;
While old Silenus staggered out
From some new-fangled lunch-house handy,

And bade the piper, with a shout,
To strike up Yankee Doodle Dandy!

A newsboy and a peanut girl
Like little fauns began to caper:
His hair was all in tangled curl,
Her tawny legs were bare and taper;
And still the gathering larger grew,
And gave its pence and crowded nigher,
While aye the shepherd-minstrel blew
His pipe, and struck the gamut higher.

O heart of Nature, beating still
With throbs her vernal passion taught her,—
Even here, as on the vine-clad hill,
Or by the Arethusan water!
New forms may fold the speech, new lands
Arise within these ocean-portals,
But Music waves eternal wands,—
Enchantress of the souls of mortals!

So thought I,—but among us trod
A man in blue, with legal baton,
And scoffed the vagrant demigod,
And pushed him from the step I sat on.
Doubting I mused upon the cry,
«Great Pan is dead!»—and all the people
Went on their ways;—and clear and high
The quarter sounded from the steeple.

THE DISCOVERER

I have a little kinsman
Whose earthly summers are but three,
And yet a voyager is he
Greater than Drake or Frobisher,
Than all their peers together!
He is a brave discoverer,
And, far beyond the tether
Of them who seek the frozen pole,
Has sailed where the noiseless surges roll.
Ay, he has traveled whither
A wingèd pilot steered his bark
Through the portals of the dark,

Past hoary Mimir's well and tree,
Across the unknown sea.

Suddenly, in his fair young hour,
Came one who bore a flower,
And laid it in his dimpled hand
With this command:—
«Henceforth thou art a rover!
Thou must make a voyage far,
Sail beneath the evening star,
And a wondrous land discover.»—
With his sweet smile innocent
Our little kinsman went.

Since that time no word
From the absent has been heard.
Who can tell
How he fares, or answer well
What the little one has found
Since he left us, outward bound?
Would that he might return!
Then should we learn
From the pricking of his chart
How the skyey roadways part.
Hush! does not the baby this way bring,
To lay beside this severed curl,
Some starry offering
Of chrysolite or pearl?

Ah, no! not so!
We may follow on his track,
But he comes not back.
And yet I dare aver
He is a brave discoverer
Of climes his elders do not know.
He has more learning than appears
On the scroll of twice three thousand years,
More than in the groves is taught,
Or from furthest Indies brought;
He knows, perchance, how spirits fare,
What shapes the angels wear,
What is their guise and speech
In those lands beyond our reach;
And his eyes behold
Things that shall never, never be to mortal hearers told.

CAVALRY SONG

Our good steeds snuff the evening air,
Our pulses with their purpose tingle:
The foeman's fires are twinkling there;
He leaps to hear our sabres jingle!
Halt!
Each carbine sends its whizzing ball:
Now, cling! clang! forward all,
Into the fight!

Dash on beneath the smoking dome,
Through level lightnings gallop nearer!
One look to Heaven! No thoughts of home:
The guidons that we bear are dearer.
Charge!
Cling! clang! forward all!
Heaven help those whose horses fall!
Cut left and right!

They flee before our fierce attack!
They fall, they spread in broken surges!
Now, comrades, bear our wounded back,
And leave the foeman to his dirges.
Wheel!
The bugles sound the swift recall:
Cling! clang! backward all!
Home, and good-night!

THE FUTURE OF AMERICAN POETRY

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There are questions that come home to one who would aid in speeding the return of «the Muse, disgusted at» the «age and clime.» Can I, he asks, be reckoned with the promoters of her new reign? Yes, it will be answered, if your effort is in earnest, and if you are in truth a poet. To doubt of this is almost the doubt's own confirmation. The writer to whom rhythmic phrases come as the natural utterance of his extremest hope, regret, devotion, is a poet of some degree. At the rarest crises he finds that, without and even beyond his will, life and death and all things dear and sacred are made auxiliary to the compulsive purpose of his art; just as in the passion for science, as if to verify the terrible irony of Balzac and Wordsworth, the alchemist will analyze his wife's tears, the Linnæan will botanize upon his mother's grave:—

> "Alas, and hast thou then so soon forgot
> The bond that with thy gift of song did go—
> Severe as fate, fixed and unchangeable?
> Dost thou not know this is the poet's lot!"

If when his brain is in working humor, its chambers filled with imaged pageantry, the same form of utterance becomes his ready servant, then he is a poet indeed. But if he has a dexterous metrical faculty, and hunts for theme and motive,—or if his verse does not say what otherwise cannot be said at all,—then he is a mere artisan in words, and less than those whose thought and feeling are too deep for speech. The true poet is haunted by his gift, even in hours of drudgery and enforced prosaic life. He cannot escape it. After spells of dejection and weariness, when it has seemed to leave for ever, it always, always returns again,—perishable only with himself.

Again he will ask, What are my opportunities? What is the final appraisement of the time and situation? We have noted those latter-day conditions that vex the poet's mind. Yet art is the precious outcome of all conditions: there are none that may not be transmuted in its crucible. Science, whose iconoclasm had to be considered, first of all, in our study of the Victorian period, has forced us to adjust ourselves to its dispensation. A scientific conflict with tradition always has been in progress, though never so determinedly as now. But the poet and artist keep pace with it, even forestall it, so that each new wonder leads to greater things, and the so-called doom of art is a victorious transition:—

> "If my bark sinks, 'tis to another sea."

As to material conditions, we find that the practical eagerness of the age, and of our own people before all, has so nearly satisfied its motive as to beget the intellectual and æsthetic needs to which beauty is the purveyor. As heretofore in Venice and other commonwealths, first nationality, then riches, then the rise of poetry and the arts. After materialism and the scientific stress, the demands of journalism have been the chief counter-sway to poetic activity. But our journals are now the adjuvants of imaginative effort in prose and verse: the best of them are conducted by writers who have the literary spirit, and who make room for ideal literature, even if it does not swell their lists so rapidly as that of another kind. The poet can get a hearing; our Chattertons need not starve in their garrets: there never was a better market for the wares of Apollo; their tuneful venders need not hope for wealth, but if one cannot make his genius something more than its own exceeding great reward, it is because he mistakes the period, or scorns to address himself fitly to his readers. Finally, criticism is at once more catholic and more discriminating than of old. Can it make a poet, or teach him his mission? Hardly; but it can spur him to his best, and point out the heresies from which he must free himself or address the oracle in vain.

Such being our opportunities, we have seen that the personal requirements are coequal, and their summing-up may well be the conclusion of the whole matter. Warmth, action, genuine human interest, must vivify the minstrel's art: the world will receive him if he in truth comes into his own. Taste and adroitness can no longer win by novelty. Natural emotion is the soul of poetry, as melody is of music: the same faults are engendered by overstudy of either art; there is a lack of sincerity, of irresistible impulse, in both the poet and the composer. The decorative vogue has reached its lowest grade,— that of assumption for burlesque and persiflage; just as Pre-Raphaelitism, at first a reform in art, extended to poetry, to architecture, to wall decoration, to stage-setting, finally to the dress of moonstruck blue-stockings and literary dandies. What has been gained in new design will survive. But henceforth the sense of beauty must have something "far more deeply interfused,"— the ideal, which, though not made with hands of artificers, is eternal on the earth as in the heavens, because it is inherent in the soul. There is also one prerequisite, upon which stress was laid by Dr. Storrs, in his application to modern art of Goethe's reservation as to the worth of certain engravings: "Still something is wanting in all these pictures,— the Manly. . . . The pictures lack a certain urgent power," etc. Culture, I have said, will make a poet draw ahead of his unstudious fellows; but the resolve born of conviction is needed to sustain the advance. The lecturer rightly declared that only "courageous work will suit America, whose race is essentially courageous and stoical." Our keynote assuredly should be that of freshness and joy; the sadness of declining races only, has the beauty of natural pathos. There is no cause for morbidly introspective verse — no need, I hope, for dilettanteism — in this brave country of ours for centuries to come.

I think, too, we may claim that there is no better ideal of manhood than the American ideal, derived from an aggregation of characteristic types. Our future verse should be more native than that of the past, in having a flavor more plainly distinct from the motherland. Not that our former contingent misrepresented the America of its time. Even Longfellow's work, with so much of imported theme and treatment, conveyed a sentiment that came, say what we will, from no foreign source. The reason that a decidedly autochthonous kind was not then proffered, unless by Whitman, was that a distinction between the conditions of England and America was not more strongly established. Since the War our novitiate has ended. We welcome home productions; our servility of foreign judgment has lessened, and we apply with considerable self-poise our own standards of criticism to things abroad. We have outlived the greed of childhood that depends on sustenance furnished by its elders; and are far indeed from the senile atrophy which also must borrow to recruit its wasting powers. Our debt to acute foreign critics is none the less memorable. They, in truth, were the first to counsel us that we should lean upon ourselves; to insist that we ought at least to escape Old World limitations,—the first to recognize so heartily anything purely American, even our sectional humor, as to bring about our discovery that it was not necessarily "a poor thing," although our "own."

It is agreed that sectional types, which thus have lent their raciness to various productions, are subsidiary to the formation of one that shall be national. A character formed of mingling components must undergo the phases of defective hybridity; our own is just beginning to assume a coherence that is the promise of a similar adjustment in art. As local types disappear there may be special losses, yet a general gain. The lifting of the Japanese embargo was harmful to the purity of the insular art, but added something to the arts of the world at large. Even now our English cousins, seeking for what they term Americanism in our literature, begin to find its flavor stealthily added to their own. . . .

Our people have blundered from isolation: confront them with the models of older lands and they quickly learn to choose the fit and beautiful; and the time is now reached when the finest models are widely attainable. Secondly, our inheritance is a language that is relatively the greatest treasure-house of the world's literature: at once the most laconic and the most copious of tongues, the sturdiest in its foundations of emotion and utility, the most varied by appropriation of synonyms from all languages, new and old; the youngest and most occidental of the great modes of speech, steadily diffusing itself about the globe, with no possible supplanter or successor except itself at further stages of maturity; finally, elastic and copious most of all in the land which adds to it new idioms, of cisatlantic growth, or assimilated from the dialects of many races that here contribute their diction to its own: a language whose glory is that even corruptions serve to speed its growth, and whose fine achievement long has been to make the neologism, even the solecism, of one generation the classicism of the next. This is the potent and sonorous instrument which our poet has at his command; and the genius of his country, like Ariel, bids him

«— take
This slave of music, for my sake.»

The twilight of the poets, succeeding to the brightness of their first diurnal course, is a favorable interval at which to review the careers of those whose work therewith is ended. Although at such a time public interest may set in other directions, I have adhered to a task so arduous, yet so fascinating to the critical and poetic student. When the lustre of a still more auspicious day shall yield in its turn to the recurring dusk, a new chronicler will have the range of noble imaginations to consider, heightened in significance by comparison with the field of these prior excursions. But if I have not wholly erred in respect to the lessons derivable from the past, he will not go far beyond them. The canons are not subject to change; he, in turn, will deduce the same elements appertaining to the chief of arts, and test his poets and their bequests by the same unswerving laws. And concerning the dawn which may soon break upon us unawares, as we make conjecture of the future of American song, it is difficult to keep the level of restraint — to avoid «rising on the wings of prophecy.» Who can doubt that it will correspond to the future of the land itself,— of America now wholly free and interblending, with not one but a score of civic capitals, each an emulative centre of taste and invention, a focus of energetic life, ceaseless in action, radiant with the glow of beauty and creative power?

RICHARD STEELE.

SIR RICHARD STEELE

(1671–1729)

It is entirely indicative of our opinions and feelings of the life and writings of this British author of the eighteenth century that we should think of Addison's friend and fellow-essayist as Richard, or Dick, or Dicky Steele, rather than of Sir Richard Steele, as he is known in the history of literature. Dick or Dicky Steele conveys to our minds the impression which the heavy-limbed, square-jawed, dark-eyed, tender-hearted, awkward, careless, wholly unselfish Irishman conveyed to his personal friends and acquaintances.

Irish by birth,—for he was born in Dublin in 1671,—he was of English parentage and descent, being the son of the secretary of the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, the Duke of Ormond. Yet he had many of the amiable, kindly, mirthful, genial traits attributed to the Irish race. Through the Duke's influence he was sent to the Charterhouse, London, where he first met Addison, of the same age as himself; with whom he formed the closest intimacy, which, continuing for many years, is one of the most memorable in literature. Steele always looked up to Addison, cherishing for him a respect almost reverential; and Addison's stronger, more stable, more serious character affected very favorably his own wayward, volatile nature, without causing any permanent change in it. Notwithstanding that he lived to be fifty eight,—dying at Llangunnor, Wales, September 1st, 1729,—he seemed never to have quite grown up. He preserved through all his vicissitudes, and to the very last, the same gay, reckless, jovial, irregular, prodigal disposition; never intending to do ill, but always getting into straits from which his friends were obliged to extricate him so far as they could, until he fell into new ones. His errors were ever human, ever committed without reflection; and though they demand at times broad charity, it is impossible not to forgive, on the whole, his shortcomings, and not to love him despite his grave defects. If he constantly needed help, he was constantly trying to help others; and to this cause are due most of his perplexities.

The two friends were together at Merton College, Oxford; where Steele remained for three years, but left without taking a degree. He had conceived a passion for the army; and unable to get a commission, he enlisted as a private in the Horse Guards. A rich kinsman in Ireland had menaced him with disinheritance should he take such a step; but being naturally independent, he defied interference. He was liked in the army, and gained the rank of captain; a promotion due to his colonel, Lord Cutts, to whom he had dedicated his 'Christian Hero' (published in 1701), which was so moral and pious as to displease his very worldly associates, and which was written in those moods of contrition so frequent and so transient with him. It was at this time that he made that intimate acquaintance with the follies and vices of the era, and with human nature as he saw it, which made him an acute delineator of manners when he embraced literature as a profession.

As a man about town he frequented the London theatres, and became intimately acquainted with the players and their companions. This naturally turned his mind to the stage; and in 1702 he wrote a comedy, 'The Funeral, or Grief à la Mode' (in striking contrast with the 'Christian Hero'), which met with marked favor at Drury Lane. The next year he brought out 'The Tender Husband'; and two years later a third comedy, 'The Lying Lover,' adapted from 'Le Menteur' of Thomas Corneille. This was too staid, too solemn, to suit his audience, who so energetically condemned it that he did not attempt until 1722 another play, 'The Conscious Lovers' (based on Terence's 'Andria'), his most successful drama, and conspicuously decorous.

Steele was now a popular and a fashionable man, having political no less than social position. He was appointed gazetteer and gentleman usher to Prince George of Denmark. He had taken a wife, who lived but a little while, leaving him a considerable estate in Barbadoes. His second wife (he was married again in 1707), born Molly Scurlock, increased his fortune. His letters to this wife, some four hundred of which have been preserved, form an extraordinary correspondence. They reveal the author as he was,—full of faults and weaknesses, of dissipations and repentance, of affection and tenderness, of ardent promises of reform and reckless promise-breaking. They are wholly artless and confidential, written without premeditation or second thought; mere talk on paper. They are dated from jails, taverns, wine-shops, bailiffs' offices, under the influence of vinous headaches, marital contritions, fresh impulses of devotion, and tearful regrets for neglected duties. They afford a curious, rather melancholy, at the same time entertaining, history of a drinking, impulsive, vacillating, over-generous, spendthrift, loving husband's checkered life.

To a man of Steele's temperament and habits, money was of little benefit. He was always in debt, and always would have been, whether his income were five hundred pounds or five thousand. He had neither order nor method; but in their stead numberless whims and desires. He had not the slightest conception of business; he was entirely destitute of practicality: but no kind of adversity, no misfortune, could depress his ever-buoyant spirit.

In 1709 a felicitous financial idea occurred to him; and oddly enough, he acted on it. His office of gazetteer put him in control of early foreign intelligence; and in imitation of Defoe's plan, he organized the Tatler, issuing the first number April 12th. He secured the assistance of Addison, who furnished many of the principal articles, and who aided him in procuring the appointment of commissioner of the Stamp Office. When the Whigs were overthrown in 1710, Steele, as a strong Whig, was deprived of his gazetteership, and with it the means of supplying the items of official news which were at the beginning important to the Tatler. This paper was accordingly succeeded the next year by the Spectator, mostly written by the two friends. The Tatler had appeared thrice a week, price one penny; but the Spectator appeared daily at twopence, issuing five hundred and fifty-five numbers,—the last December 6th, 1712. Many of Addison's most famous contributions were printed in the two papers; though Steele furnished the larger number, and stamped himself and his character on what he wrote. His object was to expose what was false in life, manners, morals; to strip disguises from vanity, selfishness, affectation; to recommend simplicity and sincerity; to correct public taste, and urge the adoption of true English sentiment and opinion. Steele and Addison co-operated also in the Guardian: and Steele at different periods was interested in similar periodicals, like the Englishman, the Lover, the Reader, the Plebeian; but they were short-lived, and added nothing to his reputation. Few of Steele's essays are remembered; nor is the fact that he was the originator of the noted characters «Sir Roger de Coverley» and «Will Honeycomb,» though Addison afterward adopted them, making them virtually his own.

As an essayist he is admired for vivacity and ease, but not for finish: he was often neglectful of his style. His charm is his perfect naturalness. He had great versatility, being a humorist, satirist, critic, story-teller, and remarkable in each capacity. Political acrimony raged in 1713. Steele's patriotism triumphed over self-interest; he resigned his office, and plunged headlong into political controversy. He gained a seat in Parliament as a member for Stockbridge in Hampshire; vehemently supported the Protestant succession, which he believed in peril; and published a pamphlet, 'The Crisis,' warning the kingdom against the danger of a Popish succession, for which he was expelled from the House of Commons. The death of Queen Anne mollified his opponents. In the new reign he received several profitable employments; was knighted, and elected to Parliament from Boroughbridge. But, head over heels in debt again, he was soon attacked with paralysis and rendered incapable of exertion. He retired to a small estate (left him by his second wife), where he passed away nearly forgotten by his contemporaries. He was distinguished, in an era that cherished slight respect for women, for his high opinion of and chivalrous feeling for them. No loftier compliment has ever been paid to woman than his to Lady Elizabeth Hastings: « To love her was a liberal education.»

ON BEHAVIOR AT CHURCH

From the Guardian

There is not anywhere, I believe, so much talk about religion, as among us in England; nor do I think it possible for the wit of man to devise forms of address to the Almighty in more ardent and forcible terms than are everywhere to be found in our Book of Common Prayer; and yet I have heard it read with such a negligence, affectation, and impatience, that the efficacy of it has been apparently lost to all the congregation. For my part, I make no scruple to own it, that I go sometimes to a particular place in the city, far distant from my own home, to hear a gentleman whose manner I admire, read the liturgy. I am persuaded devotion is the greatest pleasure of his soul, and there is none hears him read without the utmost reverence. I have seen the young people who have been interchanging glances of passion to each other's person, checked into an attention to the service at the interruption which the authority of his voice has given them.

But the other morning I happened to rise earlier than ordinary, and thought I could not pass my time better than to go upon the admonition of the morning bell, to the church prayers at six of the clock. I was there the first of any in the congregation, and had the opportunity (however I made use of it) to look back on all my life, and contemplate the blessing and advantage of such stated early hours for offering ourselves to our Creator, and prepossessing ourselves with the love of him, and the hopes we have from him, against the snares of business and pleasure in the ensuing day. But whether it be that people think fit to indulge their own ease in some secret, pleasing fault, or whatever it was, there was none at the confession but a set of poor scrubs of us, who could sin only in our wills, whose persons could be no temptation to one another, and might have, without interruption from anybody else, humble, lowly hearts, in frightful looks and dirty dresses, at our leisure.

When we poor souls had presented ourselves with a contrition suitable to our worthlessness, some pretty young ladies in mobs popped in here and there about the church, clattering the pew door after them, and squatting into a whisper behind their fans. Among others, one of Lady Lizard's daughters and her hopeful maid made their entrance: the young lady did not omit the ardent form behind the fan, while the maid immediately gaped round her to look for some other devout person, whom I saw at a distance, very well dressed; his air and habit a little military, but in the pertness, not the true possession of the martial character. This jackanapes was fixed at the end of a pew, with the utmost impudence declaring, by a fixed eye on that seat where our beauty was placed, the object of his devotion. This obscene sight gave me all the indignation imaginable, and I could attend to nothing but the reflection that the greatest affronts imaginable are such as no one can take notice of.

Before I was out of such vexatious inadvertencies to the business of the place, there was a great deal of good company now come in. There was a good number of very jaunty slatterns, who gave us to understand that it is neither dress nor art to which they were beholden for the town's admiration. Besides these, there were also by this time arrived two or three sets of whisperers, who carry on most of their calumnies by what they entertain one another with in that place; and we were now altogether very good company. There were indeed a few in whose looks there appeared a heavenly joy and gladness upon the entrance of a new day, as if they had gone to sleep with expectation of it. For the sake of these it is worth while that the Church keeps up such early matins throughout the cities of London and Westminster; but the generality of those who observe that hour perform it with so tasteless a behavior that it appears a task rather than a voluntary act. But of all the world, those familiar ducks who are, as it were, at home at the church, and by frequently meeting there throw the time of prayer very negligently into their common life, and make their coming together in that place as ordinary as any other action, and do not turn their conversation upon any improvements suitable to the true design of that house, but on trifles below even their worldly concerns and characters. These are little groups of acquaintance dispersed in all parts of the town, who are forsooth the only people of unspotted characters, and throw all the spots that stick on those of other people.

Malice is the ordinary vice of those who live in the mode of religion, without the spirit of it. The pleasurable world are hurried by their passions above the consideration of what others think of them, into a pursuit of irregular enjoyment; while these who forbear the gratifications of flesh and blood, without having won over the spirit to the interests of virtue, are implacable in defamations on the errors of such who offend without respect to fame. But the consideration of persons whom one cannot but take notice of when one sees them in that place, has drawn me out of my intended talk, which was to bewail that people do not know the pleasure of early hours, and of dedicating the first moments of the day, with joy and singleness of heart, to their Creator. Experience should convince us that the earlier we left our beds the seldomer should we be confined to them.

One great good which would also accrue from this, were it become a fashion, would be, that it is possible our chief divines would condescend to pray themselves, or at least those whom they substitute would be better supplied than to be forced to appear at those oraisons in a garb and attire which makes them appear mortified with worldly want, and not abstracted from the world by the contempt of it. How is it possible for a gentleman, under the income of fifty pounds a year, to be attentive to sublime things? He must rise and dress like a laborer for sordid hire, instead of approaching his place of service with the utmost pleasure and satisfaction that now he is going to be mouth of a crowd of people who have laid aside all the distinctions of this contemptible being, to beseech a protection under its manifold pains and disadvantages, or a release from it by His favor who sent them into it. He would, with decent superiority, look upon himself as orator before the Throne of Grace, for a crowd who hang upon his words while he asks for them all that is necessary in a transitory life; from the assurance that a good behavior, for a few moments in it, will purchase endless joy and happy immortality.

But who can place himself in this view who, though not pinched with want, is distracted with care from the fear of it? No: a man in the least degree below the spirit of a saint or a martyr will loll, huddle over his duty, look confused, or assume a resolution in his behavior which will be quite as ungraceful, except he is supported above the necessities of life.

« Power and commandment to his minister to declare and pronounce to his people » is mentioned with a very unguarded air, when the speaker is known in his own private condition to be almost an object of their pity and charity. This last circumstance, with many others here loosely suggested, are the occasion that one knows not how to recommend, to such as have not already a fixed sense of devotion, the pleasure of passing the earliest hours of the day in a public congregation. But were this morning solemnity as much in vogue even as it is now at more advanced hours of the day, it would necessarily have so good an effect upon us as to make us more disengaged and cheerful in conversation, and less artful and insincere in business. The world would be quite another place than it is now, the rest of the day; and every face would have an alacrity in it which can be borrowed from no other reflections but those which give us the assured protection of Omnipotence.

MR. BICKERSTAFF VISITS A FRIEND

From the Tatler

There are several persons who have many pleasures and entertainments in their possession which they do not enjoy. It is therefore a kind and good office to acquaint them with their own happiness, and turn their attention to such instances of their good fortune as they are apt to overlook. Persons in the married state often want such a monitor; and pine away their days by looking upon the same condition in anguish and murmur, which carries with it in the opinion of others a complication of all the pleasures of life, and a retreat from its inquietudes.

I am led into this thought by a visit I made an old friend, who was formerly my schoolfellow. He came to town last week with his family for the winter, and yesterday morning sent me word his wife expected me to dinner. I am, as it were, at home at that house, and every member of it knows me for their well-wisher. I cannot indeed express the pleasure it is to be met by the children with so much joy as I am when I go thither. The boys and girls strive who shall come first, when they think it is I that am knocking at the door; and that child which loses the race to me runs back again to tell the father it is Mr. Bickerstaff. This day I was led in by a pretty girl, that we all thought must have forgot me; for the family has been out of town these two years. Her knowing me again was a mighty subject with us, and took up our discourse at the first entrance. After which they began to rally me upon a thousand little stories they heard in the country, about my marriage to one of my neighbors' daughters. Upon which the gentleman, my friend, said, «Nay, if Mr. Bickerstaff marries a child of any of his old companions, I hope mine shall have the preference; there is Mrs. Mary is now sixteen, and would make him as fine a widow as the best of them. But I know him too well: he is so enamored with the very memory of those who flourished in our youth, that he will not so much as look upon the modern beauties. I remember, old gentleman, how often you went home in a day to refresh your countenance and dress, when Teraminta reigned in your heart. As we came up in the coach, I repeated to my wife some of your verses on her.»

With such reflections on little passages which happened long ago, we passed our time, during a cheerful and elegant meal. After dinner, his lady left the room, as did also the children. As soon as we were alone, he took me by the hand: «Well, my good friend,» says he, «I am heartily glad to see thee: I was afraid you would never have seen all the company that dined with you to-day again. Do not you think the good woman of the house a little altered since you followed her from the play-house, to find out who she was, for me?» I perceived a tear fall down his cheek as he spoke, which moved me not a little. But to turn the discourse I said, «She is not indeed quite that creature she was when she returned me the letter I carried from you: and told me ‹she hoped, as I was a gentleman, I would be employed no more to trouble her, who had never offended me; but would be so much the gentleman's friend, as to dissuade him from a pursuit which he could never succeed in.› You may remember, I thought her in earnest; and you were forced to employ your cousin Will, who made his sister get acquainted with her, for you. You cannot expect her to be for ever fifteen.»

«Fifteen!» replied my good friend: «ah! you little understand, you that have lived a bachelor, how great, how exquisite a pleasure there is in being really beloved! It is impossible that the most beauteous face in nature should raise in me such pleasing ideas as when I look upon that excellent woman. That fading in her countenance is chiefly caused by her watching with me in my fever. This was followed by a fit of sickness which had like to have carried her off last winter. I tell you sincerely, I have so many obligations to her that I cannot with any sort of moderation think of her present state of health. But as to what you say of fifteen, she gives me every-day pleasures beyond what I ever knew in the possession of her beauty, when I was in the vigor of youth. Every moment of her life brings me fresh instances of her complacency to my inclinations, and her prudence in regard to my fortune. Her face is to me much more beautiful than when I first saw it; there is no decay in any feature which I cannot trace from the very instant it was occasioned by some anxious concern for my welfare and interests. Thus at the same time, methinks, the love I conceived towards her for what she was, is heightened by my gratitude for what she is. The love of a wife is as much above the idle passion commonly called by that name, as the loud laughter of buffoons is inferior to the elegant mirth of gentlemen. Oh! she is an inestimable jewel. In her examination of her household affairs, she shows a certain fearfulness to find a fault, which makes her servants obey her like children; and the meanest we have has an ingenuous shame for an offense, not always to be seen in children in other families. I speak freely to you, my old friend: ever since her sickness, things that gave me the quickest joy before, turn now to a certain anxiety. As the children play in the next room, I know the poor things by their steps; and am considering what they must do, should they lose their mother in their tender years. The pleasure I used to take in telling my boy stories of battles, and asking my girl questions about the disposal of her baby, and the gossiping of it, is turned into inward reflection and melancholy.»

He would have gone on in this tender way, when the good lady entered, and with an inexpressible sweetness in her countenance told us, «she had been searching her closet for something very good, to treat such an old friend as I was." Her husband's eyes sparkled with pleasure at the cheerfulness of her countenance; and I saw all his fears vanish in an instant. The lady observing something in our looks which showed we had been more serious than ordinary, and seeing her husband receive her with great concern under a forced cheerfulness, immediately guessed at what we had been talking of; and applying herself to me, said with a smile, "Mr. Bickerstaff, do not believe a word of what he tells you: I shall still live to have you for my second, as I have often promised you, unless he takes more care of himself than he has done since his coming to town. You must know he tells me that he finds London is a much more healthy place than the country; for he sees several of his old acquaintance and schoolfellows are here young fellows with fair full-bottomed periwigs. I could scarce keep him in this morning from going out open-breasted."

My friend, who is always extremely delighted with her agreeable humor, made her sit down with us. She did it with that easiness which is peculiar to women of sense; and to keep up the good-humor she had brought in with her, turned her raillery upon me. "Mr. Bickerstaff, you remember you followed me one night from the play-house: suppose you should carry me thither to-morrow night, and lead me into the front box." This put us into a long field of discourse about the beauties who were mothers to the present, and shined in the boxes twenty years ago. I told her, "I was glad she had transferred so many of her charms, and I did not question but her eldest daughter was within half a year of being a toast."

We were pleasing ourselves with this fantastical preferment of the young lady, when on a sudden we were alarmed with the noise of a drum, and immediately entered my little godson to give me a point of war. His mother, between laughing and chiding, would have put him out of the room; but I would not part with him so. I found, upon conversation with him, though he was a little noisy in his mirth, that the child had excellent parts, and was a great master of all the learning on the other side eight years old. I perceived him a very great historian in Æsop's Fables: but he frankly declared to me his mind, that "he did not delight in that learning, because he did not believe they were true;" for which reason I found he had very much turned his studies, for about a twelvemonth past, into the lives and adventures of Don Belianis of Greece, Guy of Warwick, the Seven Champions, and other historians of that age. I could not but observe the satisfaction the father took in the forwardness of his son; and that these diversions might turn to some profit, I found the boy had made remarks which might be of service to him during the course of his whole life. He would tell you the mismanagements of John Hickerthrift, find fault with the passionate temper in Bevis of Southampton, and loved St. George for being the champion of England; and by this means had his thoughts insensibly molded into the notions of discretion, virtue, and honor. I was extolling his accomplishments, when the mother told me that "the little girl who led me in this morning was in her way a better scholar than he. Betty," said she, "deals chiefly in fairies and sprights; and sometimes in a winter night will terrify the maids with her accounts, until they are afraid to go up to bed."

I sat with them until it was very late, sometimes in merry, sometimes in serious discourse, with this particular pleasure, which gives the only true relish to all conversation,—a sense that every one of us liked each other. I went home, considering the different conditions of a married life and that of a bachelor; and I must confess it struck me with a secret concern, to reflect that whenever I go off I shall leave no traces behind me. In this pensive mood I returned to my family; that is to say, to my maid, my dog, and my cat, who only can be the better or worse for what happens to me.

ON COFFEE-HOUSES; SUCCESSION OF VISITORS; CHARACTER OF EUBULUS

From the Spectator

It is very natural for a man who is not turned for mirthful meetings of men, or assemblies of the fair sex, to delight in that sort of conversation which we find in coffee-houses. Here a man of my temper is in his element; for if he cannot talk, he can still be more agreeable to his company, as well as pleased in himself, in being only a hearer. It is a secret known but to few, yet of no small use in the conduct of life, that when you fall into a man's conversation, the first thing you should consider is whether he has a great inclination to hear you, or that you should hear him. The latter is the more general desire; and I know very able flatterers that never speak a word in praise of the persons from whom they obtain daily favors, but still practice a skillful attention to whatever is uttered by those with whom they converse. We are very curious to observe the behavior of great men and their clients: but the same passions and interests move men in lower spheres; and I (that have nothing else to do but make observations) see in every parish, street, lane, and alley of this populous city, a little potentate that has his court, and his flatterers, who lay snares for his affection and favor by the same arts that are practiced upon men in higher stations.

In the place I most usually frequent, men differ rather in the time of day in which they make a figure, than in any real greatness above one another. I, who am at the coffee-house at six in the morning, know that my friend Beaver the haberdasher has a levee of more undissembled friends and admirers than most of the courtiers or generals of Great Britain. Every man about him has perhaps a newspaper in his hand; but none can pretend to guess what step will be taken in any one court of Europe, till Mr. Beaver has thrown down his pipe and declares what measures the allies must enter into upon this new posture of affairs. Our coffee-house is near one of the Inns of Court, and Beaver has the audience and admiration of his neighbors from six till within a quarter of eight; at which time he is interrupted by the students of the house, some of whom are ready dressed for Westminster at eight in a morning, with faces as busy as if they were retained in every cause there; and others come in their night-gowns to saunter away their time, as if they never designed to go thither. I do not know that I meet in any of my walks objects which move both my spleen and laughter so effectually as those young fellows at the Grecian, Squire's, Serle's, and all other coffee-houses adjacent to the law, who rise early for no other purpose but to publish their laziness. One would think these young virtuosos take a gay cap and slippers, with a scarf and party-colored gown, to be ensigns of dignity; for the vain things approach each other with an air which shows they regard one another for their vestments. I have observed that the superiority among these proceeds from an opinion of gallantry and fashion. The gentleman in the strawberry sash, who presides so much over the rest, has, it seems, subscribed to every opera this last winter, and is supposed to receive favors from one of the actresses.

When the day grows too busy for these gentlemen to enjoy any longer the pleasures of their dishabille with any manner of confidence, they give place to men who have business or good sense in their faces, and come to the coffee-house either to transact affairs or enjoy conversation. The persons to whose behavior and discourse I have most regard, are such as are between these two sorts of men; such as have not spirits too active to be happy and well pleased in a private condition, nor complexions too warm to make them neglect the duties and relations of life. Of these sort of men consist the worthier part of mankind; of these are all good fathers, generous brothers, friends, and faithful subjects. Their entertainments are derived rather from reason than imagination; which is the cause that there is no impatience or instability in their speech or action. You see in their countenances they are at home, and in quiet possession of their present instant as it passes, without desiring to quicken it by gratifying any passion, or prosecuting any new design. These are the men formed for society, and those little communities which we express by the word neighborhoods.

The coffee-house is the place of rendezvous to all that live near it, who are thus turned to relish calm and ordinary life. Eubulus presides over the middle hours of the day, when this assembly of men meet together. He enjoys a great fortune handsomely, without launching into expense; and exerts many noble and useful qualities, without appearing in any public employment. His wisdom and knowledge are serviceable to all that think fit to make use of them; and he does the office of a counsel, a judge, an executor, and a friend, to all his acquaintance, not only without the profits which attend such offices, but also without the deference and homage which are usually paid to them. The giving of thanks is displeasing to him. The greatest gratitude you can show him is to let him see that you are a better man for his services; and that you are as ready to oblige others as he is to oblige you.

In the private exigencies of his friends, he lends at legal value considerable sums, which he might highly increase by rolling in the public stocks. He does not consider in whose hands his money will improve most, but where it will do most good.

Eubulus has so great an authority in his little diurnal audience, that when he shakes his head at any piece of public news, they all of them appear dejected; and on the contrary, go home to their dinners with a good stomach and cheerful aspect when Eubulus seems to intimate that things go well. Nay, their veneration towards him is so great that when they are in other company they speak and act after him; are wise in his sentences, and are no sooner sat down at their own tables, but they hope or fear, rejoice or despond, as they saw him do at the coffee-house. In a word, every man is Eubulus as soon as his back is turned.

Having here given an account of the several reigns that succeed each other from daybreak till dinner-time, I shall mention the monarchs of the afternoon on another occasion, and shut up the whole series of them with the history of Tom the Tyrant; who, as the first minister of the coffee-house, takes the government upon him between the hours of eleven and twelve at night, and gives his orders in the most arbitrary manner to the servants below him, as to the disposition of liquors, coal, and cinders.

ON THE EFFECTS OF PUBLIC MOURNING: PLAINNESS IN DRESS

From the Tatler

When artists would expose their diamonds to an advantage, they usually set them to show in little cases of black velvet. By this means the jewels appear in their true and genuine lustre, while there is no color that can infect their brightness, or give a false cast to the water. When I was at the opera the other night, the assembly of ladies in mourning made me consider them in the same kind of view. A dress wherein there is so little variety shows the face in all its natural charms, and makes one differ from another only as it is more or less beautiful. Painters are ever careful of offending against a rule which is so essential in all just representations. The chief figure must have the strongest point of light, and not be injured by any gay colorings that may draw away the attention to any less considerable part of the picture. The present fashion obliges everybody to be dressed with propriety, and makes the ladies' faces the principal objects of sight. Every beautiful person shines out in all the excellence with which nature has adorned her; gaudy ribbons and glaring colors being now out of use, the sex has no opportunity given them to disfigure themselves, which they seldom fail to do whenever it lies in their power. When a woman comes to her glass, she does not employ her time in making herself look more advantageously what she really is; but endeavors to be as much another creature as she possibly can. Whether this happens because they stay so long, and attend their work so diligently, that they forget the faces and persons which they first sat down with, or whatever it is, they seldom rise from the toilet the same women they appeared when they began to dress. What jewel can the charming Cleora place in her ears that can please her beholders so much as her eyes? The cluster of diamonds upon the breast can add no beauty to the fair chest of ivory which supports it. It may indeed tempt a man to steal a woman, but never to love her. Let Thalestris change herself into a motley party-colored animal: the pearl necklace, the flowered stomacher, the artificial nosegay, and shaded furbelow may be of use to attract the eye of the beholder, and turn it from the imperfections of her features and shape. But if ladies will take my word for it (and as they dress to please men, they ought to consult our fancy rather than their own in this particular), I can assure them there is nothing touches our imagination so much as a beautiful woman in a plain dress. There might be more agreeable ornaments found in our own manufacture, than any that rise out of the looms of Persia.

This, I know, is a very harsh doctrine to womankind, who are carried away with everything that is showy, and with what delights the eye, more than any other species of living creatures whatsoever. Were the minds of the sex laid open, we should find the chief idea in one to be a tippet, in another a muff, in a third a fan, and in a fourth a farthingale. The memory of an old visiting lady is so filled with gloves, silks, and ribbons, that I can look upon it as nothing else but a toy shop. A matron of my acquaintance, complaining of her daughter's vanity, was observing that she had all of a sudden held up her head higher than ordinary, and taken an air that showed a secret satisfaction in herself, mixed with the scorn of others. «I did not know,» says my friend, «what to make of the carriage of this fantastical girl, until I was informed by her eldest sister that she had a pair of striped garters on." This odd turn of mind often makes the sex unhappy, and disposes them to be struck with everything that makes a show, however trifling and superficial.

Many a lady has fetched a sigh at the toss of a wig, and been ruined by the tapping of a snuff-box. It is impossible to describe all the execution that was done by the shoulder-knot while that fashion prevailed, or to reckon up all the virgins that have fallen a sacrifice to a pair of fringed gloves. A sincere heart has not made half so many conquests as an open waistcoat; and I should be glad to see an able head make so good a figure in a woman's company as a pair of red heels. A Grecian hero, when he was asked whether he could play upon the lute, thought he had made a very good reply when he answered, "No; but I can make a great city of a little one." Notwithstanding his boasted wisdom, I appeal to the heart of any toast in town, whether she would not think the lutenist preferable to the statesman? I do not speak this out of any aversion that I have to the sex; on the contrary, I have always had a tenderness for them: but I must confess, it troubles me very much to see the generality of them place their affections on improper objects, and give up all the pleasures of life for gewgaws and trifles.

Mrs. Margery Bickerstaff, my great-aunt, had a thousand pounds to her portion, which our family was desirous of keeping among themselves, and therefore used all possible means to turn off her thoughts from marriage. The method they took was, in any time of danger, to throw a new gown or petticoat in her way. When she was about twenty-five years of age she fell in love with a man of an agreeable temper and equal fortune, and would certainly have married him had not my grandfather, Sir Jacob, dressed her up in a suit of flowered satin; upon which she set so immoderate a value upon herself that the lover was contemned and discarded. In the fortieth year of her age she was again smitten; but very luckily transferred her passion to a tippet, which was presented to her by another relation who was in the plot. This, with a white sarsenet hood, kept her safe in the family until fifty. About sixty, which generally produces a kind of latter spring in amorous constitutions, my aunt Margery had again a colt's tooth in her head; and would certainly have eloped from the mansion-house had not her brother Simon, who was a wise man and a scholar, advised to dress her in cherry-colored ribbons, which was the only expedient that could have been found out by the wit of man to preserve the thousand pounds in our family, part of which I enjoy at this time.

This discourse puts me in mind of a humorist mentioned by Horace, called Eutrapelus, who when he designed to do a man a mischief made him a present of a gay suit; and brings to my memory another passage of the same author, when he describes the most ornamental dress that a woman can appear in with two words, *simplex munditiis*, which I have quoted for the benefit of my female readers.

ON THE ART OF GROWING OLD

From the Tatler

It would be a good appendix to 'The Art of Living and Dying,' if any one would write 'The Art of Growing Old,' and teach men to resign their pretensions to the pleasures and gallantries of youth, in proportion to the alteration they find in themselves by the approach of age and infirmities. The infirmities of this stage of life would be much fewer if we did not affect those which attend the more vigorous and active part of our days; but instead of studying to be wiser, or being contented with our present follies, the ambition of many of us is also to be the same sort of fools we formerly have been. I have often argued, as I am a professed lover of women, that our sex grows old with a much worse grace than the other does; and have ever been of opinion that there are more well-pleased old women than old men. I thought it a good reason for this, that the ambition of the fair sex being confined to advantageous marriages, or shining in the eyes of men, their parts were over sooner, and consequently the errors in the performances of them. The conversation of this evening has not convinced me of the contrary; for one or two fop-women shall not make a balance for the crowds of coxcombs among ourselves, diversified according to the different pursuits of pleasure and business.

Returning home this evening a little before my usual hour, I scarce had seated myself in my easy-chair, stirred the fire, and stroked my cat, but I heard somebody come rumbling up-stairs. I saw my door opened, and a human figure advancing towards me so fantastically put together that it was some minutes before

I discovered it to be my old and intimate friend Sam Trusty. Immediately I rose up, and placed him in my own seat; a compliment I pay to few. The first thing he uttered was, "Isaac, fetch me a cup of your cherry brandy before you offer to ask any question." He drank a lusty draught, sat silent for some time, and at last broke out: "I am come," quoth he, "to insult thee for an old fantastic dotard, as thou art, in ever defending the women. I have this evening visited two widows who are now in that state I have often heard you call an 'after-life'; I suppose you mean by it, an existence which grows out of past entertainments, and is an untimely delight in the satisfactions which they once set their hearts upon too much to be ever able to relinquish. Have but patience," continued he, "until I give you a succinct account of my ladies, and of this night's adventure.

"They are much of an age, but very different in their characters. The one of them, with all the advances which years have made upon her, goes on in a certain romantic road of love and friendship which she fell into in her teens; the other has transferred the amorous passions of her first years to the love of cronies, pets, and favorites, with which she is always surrounded: but the genius of each of them will best appear by the account of what happened to me at their houses. About five this afternoon, being tired with study, the weather inviting, and time lying a little upon my hands, I resolved at the instigation of my evil genius to visit them; their husbands having been our contemporaries. This I thought I could do without much trouble, for both live in the very next street.

"I went first to my lady Camomile; and the butler, who had lived long in the family, and seen me often in his master's time, ushered me very civilly into the parlor, and told me though my lady had given strict orders to be denied, he was sure I might be admitted, and bid the black boy acquaint his lady that I was come to wait upon her. In the window lay two letters, one broke open, the other fresh sealed with a wafer: the first directed to the divine Cosmelia, the second to the charming Lucinda; but both, by the indented characters, appeared to have been writ by very unsteady hands. Such uncommon addresses increased my curiosity, and put me upon asking my old friend the butler, if he knew who those persons were? 'Very well,' says he: 'that is from Mrs. Furbish to my lady, an old schoolfellow and great crony of her ladyship's; and this the answer.' I inquired in what county she lived. 'Oh dear!' says he, 'but just by, in the neighborhood. Why, she was here all this morning, and that letter came and was answered within these two hours. They have taken an odd fancy, you must know, to call one another hard names; but for all that, they love one another hugely.' By this time the boy returned with his lady's humble service to me, desiring I would excuse her; for she could not possibly see me nor anybody else, for it was opera-night."

"Methinks," says I, "such innocent folly as two old women's courtship to each other should rather make you merry than put you out of humor."

"Peace, good Isaac," says he, "no interruption, I beseech you. I got soon to Mrs. Feeble's,—she that was formerly Betty Frisk; you must needs remember her: Tom Feeble of Brazen Nose fell in love with her for her fine dancing. Well, Mrs. Ursula without further ceremony carries me directly up to her mistress's chamber, where I found her environed by four of the most mischievous animals that can ever infest a family: an old shock dog with one eye, a monkey chained to one side of the chimney, a great gray squirrel to the other, and a parrot waddling in the middle of the room. However, for a while, all was in a profound tranquillity. Upon the mantel-tree (for I am a pretty curious observer) stood a pot of lambetive electuary, with a stick of liquorice, and near it a phial of rosewater and powder of tutty. Upon the table lay a pipe filled with betony and colt's-foot, a roll of wax candle, a silver spitting-pot, and a Seville orange. The lady was placed in a large wicker chair, and her feet wrapped up in flannel, supported by cushions; and in this attitude, would you believe it, Isaac, she was reading a romance with spectacles on. The first compliments over, as she was industriously endeavoring to enter upon conversation, a violent fit of coughing seized her. This awaked Shock, and in a trice the whole room was in an uproar; for the dog barked, the squirrel squealed, the monkey chattered, the parrot screamed, and Ursula, to appease them, was more clamorous than all the rest. You, Isaac, who know how any harsh noise affects my head, may guess what I suffered from the hideous din of these discordant sounds. At length all was appeased, and quiet restored: a chair was drawn for me, where I was no sooner seated, but the parrot fixed his horny beak, as sharp as a pair of shears, in one of my heels, just above the shoe. I sprung from the place with an unusual agility; and so, being within the monkey's reach, he snatches off my new bob-wig and throws it upon two apples that were roasting by a sullen sea-coal fire. I was nimble enough to save it from any further damage than singeing the foretop. I put it on; and composing myself as well as I could, I drew my chair towards the other side of the chimney. The good lady, as soon as she had recovered breath, employed it in making a thousand apologies, and with great eloquence and a numerous train of words lamented my misfortune. In the middle of her harangue, I felt something scratching near my knee; and feeling what it should be, found the squirrel had got into my coat pocket. As I endeavored to remove him from his burrow, he made his teeth meet through the fleshy part of my forefinger. This gave me an inexpressible pain. The Hungary water was immediately brought to bathe it, and gold-beater's skin applied to stop the blood. The lady renewed her excuses; but being now out of all patience, I abruptly took my leave, and hobbling down-stairs with heedless haste, I set my foot full in a pail of water, and down we came to the bottom together."

Here my friend concluded his narrative, and with a composed countenance I began to make him compliments of condolence; but he started from his chair, and said, "Isaac, you may spare your speeches,—I expect no reply. When I told you this, I knew you would laugh at me; but the next woman that makes me ridiculous shall be a young one."

ON FLOGGING AT SCHOOLS

From the Spectator

I AM very much at a loss to express by any word that occurs to me in our language, that which is understood by *indoles* in Latin. The natural disposition to any particular art, science, profession, or trade, is very much to be consulted in the care of youth, and studied by men for their own conduct when they form to themselves any scheme of life. It is wonderfully hard, indeed, for a man to judge of his own capacity impartially. That may look great to me which may appear little to another; and I may be carried by fondness towards myself so far as to attempt things too high for my talents and accomplishments. But it is not, methinks, so very difficult a matter to make a judgment of the abilities of others, especially of those who are in their infancy.

My commonplace-book directs me on this occasion to mention the dawning of greatness in Alexander, who, being asked in his youth to contend for a prize in the Olympic games, answered he would, if he had kings to run against him. Cassius, who was one of the conspirators against Cæsar, gave as great a proof of his temper, when in his childhood he struck a playfellow, the son of Sylla, for saying his father was master of the Roman people. Scipio is reported to have answered, when some flatterers at supper were asking him what the Romans should do for a general after his death, « Take Marius.» Marius was then a very boy, and had given no instances of his valor; but it was visible to Scipio, from the manners of the youth, that he had a soul formed for the attempt and execution of great undertakings.

I must confess I have very often, with much sorrow, bewailed the misfortune of the children of Great Britain, when I consider the ignorance and undiscerning of the generality of schoolmasters. The boasted liberty we talk of is but a mean reward for the long servitude, the many heartaches and terrors, to which our childhood is exposed in going through a grammar-school. Many of these stupid tyrants exercise their cruelty without any manner of distinction of the capacities of children, or the intention of parents in their behalf. There are many excellent tempers which are worthy to be nourished and cultivated with all possible diligence and care, that were never designed to be acquainted with Aristotle, Tully, or Virgil; and there are as many who have capacities for understanding every word those great persons have writ, and yet were not born to have any relish of their writings. For want of this common and obvious discerning in those who have the care of youth, we have so many hundred unaccountable creatures every age whipped up into great scholars, that are for ever near a right understanding and will never arrive at it. These are the scandal of letters, and these are generally the men who are to teach others.

The sense of shame and honor is enough to keep the world itself in order without corporal punishment, much more to train the minds of uncorrupted and innocent children. It happens, I doubt not, more than once in a year, that a lad is chastised for a blockhead, when it is good apprehension that makes him incapable of knowing what his teacher means. A brisk imagination very often may suggest an error, which a lad could not have fallen into if he had been as heavy in conjecturing as his master in explaining. But there is no mercy even towards a wrong interpretation of his meaning: the sufferings of the scholar's body are to rectify the mistakes of his mind.

I am confident that no boy who will not be allured to letters without blows, will ever be brought to anything with them. A great or good mind must necessarily be the worse for such indignities; and it is a sad change, to lose of its virtue for the improvement of its knowledge. No one who has gone through what they call a great school, but must remember to have seen children of excellent and ingenuous natures (as has afterwards appeared in their manhood),—I say no man has passed through this way of education but must have seen an ingenuous creature, expiring with shame, with pale looks, beseeching sorrow, and silent tears, throw up its honest eyes, and kneel on its tender knees to an inexorable blockhead to be forgiven the false quantity of a word in making a Latin verse. The child is punished, and the next day he commits a like crime, and so a third with the same consequence. I would fain ask any reasonable man whether this lad, in the simplicity of his native innocence, full of shame, and capable of any impression from that grace of soul, was not fitter for any purpose in this life, than after that spark of virtue is extinguished in him, though he is able to write twenty verses in an evening?

Seneca says, after his exalted way of talking, "As the immortal gods never learnt any virtue, though they are endued with all that is good, so there are some men who have so natural a propensity to what they should follow, that they learn it almost as soon as they hear it." Plants and vegetables are cultivated into the production of finer fruits than they would yield without that care; and yet we cannot entertain hopes of producing a tender conscious spirit into acts of virtue, without the same methods as are used to cut timber, or give new shape to a piece of stone.

It is wholly to this dreadful practice that we may attribute a certain hardiness and ferocity which some men, though liberally educated, carry about them in all their behavior. To be bred like a gentleman and punished like a malefactor must, as we see it does, produce that illiberal sauciness which we see sometimes in men of letters.

The Spartan boy who suffered the fox (which he had stolen and hid under his coat) to eat into his bowels, I daresay had not half the wit or petulance which we learn at great schools among us; but the glorious sense of honor, or rather fear of shame, which he demonstrated in that action, was worth all the learning in the world without it.

It is, methinks, a very melancholy consideration, that a little negligence can spoil us, but great industry is necessary to improve us; the most excellent natures are soon depreciated, but evil tempers are long before they are exalted into good habits. To help this by punishments is the same thing as killing a man to cure him of a distemper: when he comes to suffer punishment in that one circumstance, he is brought below the existence of a rational creature, and is in the state of a brute that moves only by the admonition of stripes. But since this custom of educating by the lash is suffered by the gentry of Great Britain, I would prevail only that honest heavy lads may be dismissed from slavery sooner than they are at present, and not whipped on to their fourteenth or fifteenth year, whether they expect any progress from them or not. Let the child's capacity be forthwith examined, and he sent to some mechanic way of life, without respect to his birth, if nature designed him for nothing higher; let him go before he has innocently suffered, and is debased into a dereliction of mind for being what it is no guilt to be, a plain man. I would not here be supposed to have said that our learned men of either robe who have been whipped at school are not still men of noble and liberal minds; but I am sure they would have been much more so than they are, had they never suffered that infamy.

THE ART OF STORY-TELLING

From the Guardian

I HAVE often thought that a story-teller is born, as well as a poet. It is, I think, certain that some men have such a peculiar cast of mind, that they see things in another light than men of grave dispositions. Men of a lively imagination and a mirthful temper will represent things to their hearers in the same manner as they themselves were affected with them;

and whereas serious spirits might perhaps have been disgusted at the sight of some odd occurrences in life, yet the very same occurrences shall please them in a well-told story, where the disagreeable parts of the images are concealed, and those only which are pleasing exhibited to the fancy. Story-telling is therefore not an art, but what we call a «knack»; it does not so much subsist upon wit as upon humor; and I will add that it is not perfect without proper gesticulations of the body, which naturally attend such merry emotions of the mind. I know very well that a certain gravity of countenance sets some stories off to advantage, where the hearer is to be surprised in the end: but this is by no means a general rule; for it is frequently convenient to aid and assist by cheerful looks and whimsical agitations. I will go yet further; and affirm that the success of a story very often depends upon the make of the body, and formation of the features, of him who relates it. I have been of this opinion ever since I criticized upon the chin of Dick Dewlap. I very often had the weakness to repine at the prosperity of his conceits, which made him pass for a wit with the widow at the coffee-house, and the ordinary mechanics that frequent it; nor could I myself forbear laughing at them most heartily, though upon examination I thought most of them very flat and insipid. I found, after some time, that the merit of his wit was founded upon the shaking of a fat paunch, and the tossing up of a pair of rosy jowls. Poor Dick had a fit of sickness which robbed him of his fat and his fame at once; and it was full three months before he regained his reputation, which rose in proportion to his floridity. He is now very jolly and ingenious, and hath a good constitution for wit.

Those who are thus adorned with the gifts of nature are apt to show their parts with too much ostentation: I would therefore advise all the professors of this art never to tell stories but as they seem to grow out of the subject-matter of the conversation, or as they serve to illustrate or enliven it. Stories that are very common are generally irksome; but may be aptly introduced, provided they be only hinted at, and mentioned by way of allusion. Those that are altogether new should never be ushered in without a short and pertinent character of the chief persons concerned, because by that means you make the company acquainted with them; and it is a certain rule, that slight and trivial accounts of those who are familiar to us administer more mirth than the brightest points of wit in unknown characters.

LAURENCE STERNE

LAURENCE STERNE

(1713-1768)

The life of the Reverend Laurence Sterne was as inconsistent with his profession as with his writings. Reading these, no one would for a moment believe that he was a clergyman. Such a career as his would not be possible to-day; but to a Church of England parson of the eighteenth century, extraordinary moral latitude was allowed, and toward him extraordinary tolerance was exercised. Although Sterne's sermons were clever, they were very peculiar. His contemporaries thought of him only as a literary man, and it is doubtful if he took himself seriously as a cleric. He was a humorist to the marrow, and had all the vagaries of his natural predilection. Although in his day the English Church was chosen for a calling, like the army, the navy, or the law, and the revenue from a benefice was fitly named a living, it is not likely that he voluntarily selected his profession.

He was the great-grandson of Dr. Richard Sterne, Archbishop of York; and the recollection of his distinguished ancestor, with considerations of family influence, must have decided his vocation. His father, a younger son, was an ensign of the 34th Regiment, with which he served in Flanders, taking part in the sieges of Lisle and Douay. His mother was Agnes Hebert, widow of a captain of good connections. The ensign and his wife went to Clonmel, in Ireland, at the close of the war; and there, in barracks, Laurence was born, November 24th, 1713; his parents and all his progenitors being English. His father having been recalled into active service, the child was carried from barracks to transport, from Ireland to England, and was familiar with the shifts, hardships, and vulgarities of a vagabond military life, until he reached his tenth year. This happy-go-lucky existence, with its fun, its extravagance, and its pinching poverty, no doubt influenced his character, and affected his ways of thinking. At the age of ten he was fortunately rescued from it by a good-natured cousin, Squire Sterne, and sent first to school at Halifax, and then to Jesus College, Cambridge, of which the archiepiscopal great-grandfather had been master. He was entered as a sizar; and in exchange for his free commons and free tuition, had to render such services as Goldsmith gave a few years later,— sweeping the courts, carrying up the dishes to the fellows' dining-hall, and pouring the ale. The position involved some mortifications, and the little beneficiary, already half an invalid, was unequal to much hard work. But he seems to have accepted all the conditions of life with a good-natured philosophy that made him popular.

After ordination he procured, through another kinsman, Dr. Jaques Sterne, the vicarage of Sutton in Yorkshire, and in time a prebendal stall in York Cathedral. Marrying at twenty-eight, he received from a friend of his wife the living of Stillington, in the immediate neighborhood of Sutton. The churchman had been fortunate from his boyhood; and that supposed good luck continued which led to physical and moral deterioration, and his premature death at fifty-four. For nearly twenty years he led a free-and-easy life in the country,—reading, painting, fiddling, fishing, shooting, dining, but writing nothing save his regular sermons, with occasional political squibs and paragraphs for a Whig newspaper. He had gained, however, a local reputation for wit and story-telling, and was much quoted in York for smart sayings, not at all sacerdotal. His disposition was extremely gay, and the kind of gayety he preferred was expensive. His income proving inadequate, he began to run in debt,—a habit which increased with his years. He had published a few sermons which found admirers; but on the first day of January, 1760, being then forty-six years of age, he burst on an astonished world with two volumes of ‘The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gent.’

Though printed in the provincial town of York, the story gave him instantaneous renown. York was immensely scandalized at the satirical levity of its prebend; but London was taken captive by the cleverness and the unconventionality of the new free-lance. The book was republished under the pen-name of Yorick; Yorick being a character in ‘Tristram Shandy,’—a sporting parson, who claims descent from the king's jester in ‘Hamlet.’ Everybody, however, soon knew the author to be no other than Laurence Sterne. Eager to enjoy his triumph, he visited London, and was received with an enthusiasm wholly beyond his fondest anticipations. He was honored and flattered as few authors have been; he was feasted, courted, caressed; he became at once the talk and the lion of the town. It was a distinction to have seen, much more to have spoken to, Laurence Sterne. He was classed with Fielding, Richardson, and Smollett as a master of prose fiction. Praise was exhausted on his humor, his invention, his learning, his originality. Lord Falconbridge conferred on him the living of Coxwould; the arrogant Warburton, Bishop of Gloucester, presented him with a purse of gold; Reynolds painted his portrait; Dodsley offered him seven hundred pounds for two more volumes of ‘Tristram Shandy,’ and a second edition. He was invited to dine with the most noted men of the metropolis, three weeks in advance; and the most fashionable game of cards was named after his hero.

Such incense, as welcome as intoxicating to Sterne, turned his head, ruined his fragile constitution, and undermined such moral principles as he still professed. Having once enjoyed the stimulus, the diversity, the delightful adulation of London, he could not content himself in the provinces. He took a house in York for his wife and daughter Lydia, to whom he was much attached; but passed most of his own time in the capital, or on the Continent.

The third and fourth volumes of ‹Tristram Shandy› appeared in 1761; the fifth and sixth in 1762. Sterne was «fully determined to write as hard as could be,» and was sure that he could give the public «two volumes of Shandyism every year for forty years to come.» Too much feasting, however, too late hours, and perhaps too constant application, wore him out. From birth he had been delicate, —a tendency to consumption sapping his nervous energies, paralyzing his will, and vitiating perhaps his moral impulses. A hemorrhage, a cough, and increasing weakness drove him to France for a sojourn of more than two years. There he met the warmest reception from literary and fashionable circles, and wrote to Garrick from Paris:—«'Tis *comme à Londres*. I have just now a fortnight's dinners and suppers on my hands. Be it known I Shandy it away fifty times more than I was ever wont,—talk more nonsense than ever you heard me talk in all your days, and to more sorts of people.» When society would let him, he still worked at the history of the Shandy family; and in 1765, after his return to England (very little better for the sort of health journey he had undertaken), he brought out the fourth installment of two volumes. The later issues only deepened and intensified the impression made by the first two. He was universally regarded not only as a writer of rare genius, but as one of the most original of humorists, and compared with Rabelais and Cervantes. His novel was accepted on its face in that uncritical age, and not impartially judged till after his death. But in Dr. Ferriar's ‹Illustrations of Sterne,› published in 1812, that ingenious gentleman took pains to track the humorist's phrases and inventions to their source in Rabelais and other old French authors; to Burton, from whose ‹Anatomy of Melancholy› much of his erudition is «lifted»; to Bishop Hall, Dr. Donne, Dr. Arbuthnot, and many more. Yet Dr. Ferriar admitted that these appropriations were of material only; that Sterne, like Shakespeare, bettered what he took, and that his reputation as a great literary artist is not in the least affected by this habit of spoliation. Indeed, he was strikingly original,—as such characters as Walter Shandy, Uncle Toby, Corporal Trim, Dr. Slop, and the Widow Wadman abundantly testify.

‹Tristram Shandy› is in no strict sense a novel. Such story as there is is constantly interrupted by episodes, digressions, absurdities, affectations, and incongruities. In more than one volume the whole movement is suspended while the author introduces a discourse, a journey, or any other irrelevant personal experience. But he knew his own tendencies, and declared that he had reconciled «digressive motion with progressive.»

Longing to spin out the tawdry life of excitement and pleasure that seemed so fine to him, yet racked by his cough and hampered by weakness, Sterne went to Italy in 1765, hoping to improve in a milder climate. Again he gained little in health; but he managed to bring out the concluding volume of ‹Tristram Shandy› in 1767. This was received with hardly diminished favor, and edition after edition of the completed story was sold. To the taste of to-day it makes little appeal,—its premeditated quaintness, its pervading coarseness, and its archaisms repel the general reader; yet for its higher qualities it retains almost unequaled charm to a minority of cultivated minds, and even children can fall under its spell with a lasting enchantment. The ‹Sentimental Journey through France and Italy› was projected as a long story, but Sterne's strength was unequal to his resolution. In 1767 he brought out the first part—and the last; full of fine description and admirable pathos. This work was partly undertaken to ridicule Smollett's ‹Travels through France and Italy› (1766): one of its most quoted phrases, «I pity the man who can travel from Dan to Beersheba, and cry ‹'Tis all barren,›» is directly aimed at the too sincere Scotchman, whom he patently nicknames Smelfungus.

At the height of his fame, just after the publication of the ‹Sentimental Journey,› Sterne died in lodgings, «at the sign of the Silk Bag» in Old Bond Street, alone but for the presence of a hired nurse. He had desired to end his life at an inn, and his desire was fulfilled. Although he had earned much money, he died in debt; and a collection of eight hundred pounds was made at the York races for his wife and daughter.

Sterne has been accused of gross vices. He has been called a man overflowing with sentiment on paper, but devoid of real feeling; a weeper over dead asses, and a discarder of the common ties of humanity. His late biographers have defended him stoutly, declaring his memory to have been maligned. But his own correspondence, published posthumously, convicts him of many offenses. It has been said by one of his fairest critics that though in any just estimation of him, censure must be lost in pity, yet the fact remains that Sterne is one of the very few men of real genius, who, however faulty in their lives, have in their writings not sought to be faithful to the highest truth they knew. Concerning his work there is but one verdict: that whatever its superficial defects, and however unattractive its quality to modern taste, its art is exquisite; and that by reason of this its author is entitled to a place with the great masters of literature.

THE WIDOW WADMAN LAYS SIEGE TO UNCLE TOBY'S HEART

From 'The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy'

"I AM half distracted, Captain Shandy," said Mrs. Wadman, holding up her cambric handkerchief to her left eye, as she approached the door of my Uncle Toby's sentry-box. "A mote, or sand, or something — I know not what — has got into this eye of mine; do look into it — it is not in the white."

In saying which, Mrs. Wadman edged herself close in beside my Uncle Toby, and squeezing herself down upon the corner of his bench, she gave him an opportunity of doing it without rising up. "Do look into it," said she.

Honest soul! thou didst look into it with as much innocence of heart as ever child looked into a raree-show box; and 'twere as much a sin to have hurt thee.

If a man will be peeping of his own accord into things of that nature, I've nothing to say to it.

My Uncle Toby never did; and I will answer for him that he would have sat quietly upon a sofa from June to January (which, you know, takes in both the hot and cold months) with an eye as fine as the Thracian Rhodope's beside him, without being able to tell whether it was a black or a blue one.

The difficulty was to get my Uncle Toby to look at one at all.

'Tis surmounted. And —

I see him yonder, with his pipe pendulous in his hand, and the ashes falling out of it, looking and looking, then rubbing his eyes and looking again, with twice the good-nature that ever Galileo looked for a spot in the sun.

In vain! for by all the powers which animate the organ, Widow Wadman's left eye shines this moment as lucid as her right: there is neither mote, nor sand, nor dust, nor chaff, nor speck, nor particle of opaque matter floating in it; there is nothing, my dear paternal uncle, but one lambent delicious fire, furtively shooting out from every part of it, in all directions, into thine.

If thou lookest, Uncle Toby, in search of this mote one moment longer, thou art undone.

THE STORY OF LE FEVRE

From ‘The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy’

It was some time in the summer of that year in which Dendermond was taken by the Allies,—which was about seven years before my father came into the country, and about as many after the time that my Uncle Toby and Trim had privately decamped from my father's house in town in order to lay some of the finest sieges to some of the finest fortified cities in Europe,—when my Uncle Toby was one evening getting his supper, with Trim sitting behind him at a small sideboard: I say sitting, for in consideration of the Corporal's lame knee (which sometimes gave him exquisite pain), when my Uncle Toby dined or supped alone he would never suffer the Corporal to stand; and the poor fellow's veneration for his master was such, that with a proper artillery my Uncle Toby could have taken Dendermond itself with less trouble than he was able to gain this point over him: for many a time when my Uncle Toby supposed the Corporal's leg was at rest, he would look back and detect him standing behind him with the most dutiful respect; this bred more little squabbles betwixt them than all other causes for five-and-twenty years together. But this is neither here nor there: why do I mention it? Ask my pen: it governs me—I govern not it.

He was one evening sitting thus at his supper, when the landlord of a little inn in the village came into the parlor with an empty phial in his hand, to beg a glass or two of sack: “'Tis for a poor gentleman, I think of the army,” said the landlord, “who has been taken ill at my house four days ago, and has never held up his head since, or had a desire to taste anything till just now, that he has a fancy for a glass of sack and a thin toast: ‘I think,’ says he, taking his hand from his forehead, ‘it would comfort me.’ If I could neither beg, borrow, nor buy such a thing,” added the landlord, “I would almost steal it for the poor gentleman, he is so ill. I hope in God he will still mend,” continued he: “we are all of us concerned for him.”

“Thou art a good-natured soul, I will answer for thee,” cried my Uncle Toby; “and thou shalt drink the poor gentleman's health in a glass of sack thyself, and take a couple of bottles, with my service, and tell him he is heartily welcome to them, and to a dozen more if they will do him good.

"Though I am persuaded," said my Uncle Toby as the landlord shut the door, "he is a very compassionate fellow, Trim, yet I cannot help entertaining a high opinion of his guest too; there must be something more than common in him, that in so short a time should win so much upon the affections of his host."—"And of his whole family," added the Corporal, "for they are all concerned for him."—"Step after him," said my Uncle Toby; "do, Trim, and ask if he knows his name."

"I have quite forgot it, truly," said the landlord, coming back into the parlor with the Corporal, "but I can ask his son again."—"Has he a son with him, then?" said my Uncle Toby.—"A boy," replied the landlord, "of about eleven or twelve years of age: but the poor creature has tasted almost as little as his father; he does nothing but mourn and lament for him night and day. He has not stirred from the bedside these two days."

My Uncle Toby laid down his knife and fork, and thrust his plate from before him, as the landlord gave him the account; and Trim, without being ordered, took it away without saying one word, and in a few minutes after brought him his pipe and tobacco.

"Stay in the room a little," said my Uncle Toby.

"Trim," said my Uncle Toby, after he had lighted his pipe and smoked about a dozen whiffs. Trim came in front of his master and made his bow; my Uncle Toby smoked on and said no more. "Corporal," said my Uncle Toby. The Corporal made his bow. My Uncle Toby proceeded no farther, but finished his pipe.

"Trim," said my Uncle Toby, "I have a project in my head, as it is a bad night, of wrapping myself up warm in my roquelaure, and paying a visit to this poor gentleman."—"Your Honor's roquelaure," replied the Corporal, "has not once been had on since the night before your Honor received your wound, when we mounted guard in the trenches before the gate of St. Nicolas; and besides, it is so cold and rainy a night, that what with the roquelaure and what with the weather, 'twill be enough to give your Honor your death, and bring on your Honor's torment in your groin."—"I fear so," replied my Uncle Toby; "but I am not at rest in my mind, Trim, since the account the landlord has given me. I wish I had not known so much of this affair," added my Uncle Toby, "or that I had known more of it. How shall we manage it?"—"Leave it, an' please your Honor, to me," quoth the Corporal: « I'll take my hat and stick and go to the house and reconnoitre, and act accordingly; and I will bring your Honor a full account in an hour.» — « Thou shalt go, Trim,» said my Uncle Toby; « and here's a shilling for thee to drink with his servant.» — « I shall get it all out of him,» said the Corporal, shutting the door.

My Uncle Toby filled his second pipe; and had it not been that he now and then wandered from the point with considering whether it was not full as well to have the curtain of the tenaile a straight line as a crooked one, he might be said to have thought of nothing else but poor Le Fevre and his boy the whole time he smoked it.

It was not till my Uncle Toby had knocked the ashes out of his third pipe that Corporal Trim returned from the inn, and gave him the following account: —

« I despaired at first,» said the Corporal, « of being able to bring back to your Honor any kind of intelligence concerning the poor sick lieutenant.» — « Is he in the army, then ?» said my Uncle Toby.— « He is,» said the Corporal.— «And in what regiment ?» said my Uncle Toby.— « I'll tell your Honor,» replied the Corporal, « everything straightforwards as I learnt it.» — « Then, Trim, I'll fill another pipe,» said my Uncle Toby, « and not interrupt thee till thou hast done; so sit down at thy ease, Trim, in the window-seat, and begin thy story again.» — The Corporal made his old bow, which generally spoke as plain as a bow could speak it, « Your Honor is good.» And having done that, he sat down as he was ordered, and began the story to my Uncle Toby over again, in pretty near the same words.

« I despaired at first,» said the Corporal, « of being able to bring back any intelligence to your Honor about the lieutenant and his son; for when I asked where his servant was, from whom I made myself sure of knowing everything which was proper to be asked — [« That's a right distinction, Trim,» said my Uncle Toby.] — « I was answered, an' please your Honor, that he had no servant with him; that he had come to the inn with hired horses, which, upon finding himself unable to proceed (to join, I suppose, the regiment), he had dismissed the morning after he came. 'If I get better, my dear,' said he, as he gave his purse to his son to pay the man, 'we can hire horses from hence.' 'But, alas! the poor gentleman will never get from hence,' said the landlady to me, ‘for I heard the death-watch all night long; and when he dies, the youth his son will certainly die with him, for he is broken-hearted already.’

“I was hearing this account,” continued the Corporal, “when the youth came into the kitchen, to order the thin toast the landlord spoke of. ‘But I will do it for my father myself,’ said the youth.’—‘Pray let me save you the trouble, young gentleman,’ said I, taking up a fork for that purpose, and offering him my chair to sit down upon by the fire whilst I did it.—‘I believe, sir,’ said he very modestly, ‘I can please him best myself.’—‘I am sure,’ said I, ‘his Honor will not like the toast the worse for being toasted by an old soldier.’ The youth took hold of my hand, and instantly burst into tears.”—“Poor youth!” said my Uncle Toby: “he has been bred up from an infant in the army, and the name of a soldier, Trim, sounded in his ears like the name of a friend. I wish I had him here.”

“I never in the longest march,” said the Corporal, “had so great a mind to my dinner as I had to cry with him for company. What could be the matter with me, an’ please your Honor?”—“Nothing in the world, Trim,” said my Uncle Toby, blowing his nose, “but that thou art a good-natured fellow.”

“When I gave him the toast,” continued the Corporal, “I thought it was proper to tell him I was Captain Shandy’s servant, and that your Honor (though a stranger) was extremely concerned for his father, and that if there was anything in your house or cellar”—[“And thou mightest have added my purse, too,” said my Uncle Toby.]—“he was heartily welcome to it. He made a very low bow (which was meant to your Honor), but no answer, for his heart was full; so he went up-stairs with the toast. ‘I warrant you, my dear,’ said I as I opened the kitchen door, ‘your father will be well again.’ Mr. Yorick’s curate was smoking a pipe by the kitchen fire; but said not a word, good or bad, to comfort the youth. I thought it wrong,” added the Corporal.—“I think so too,” said my Uncle Toby.

“When the lieutenant had taken his glass of sack and toast, he felt himself a little revived, and sent down into the kitchen to let me know that in about ten minutes he should be glad if I would step up-stairs. ‘I believe,’ said the landlord, ‘he is going to say his prayers; for there was a book laid upon the chair by his bedside, and as I shut the door I saw his son take up a cushion.’

"'I thought,' said the curate, 'that you gentlemen of the army, Mr. Trim, never said your prayers at all.'—'I heard the poor gentleman say his prayers last night,' said the landlady, 'very devoutly, and with my own ears, or I could not have believed it.'—'Are you sure of it?' replied the curate.—'A soldier, an' please your Reverence,' said I, 'prays as often (of his own accord) as a parson; and when he is fighting for his king and for his own life, and for his honor too, he has the most reason to pray to God of any one in the whole world.'"—"'Twas well said of thee, Trim," said my Uncle Toby.—"'But when a soldier,' said I, 'an' please your Reverence, has been standing for twelve hours together in the trenches up to his knees in cold water, or engaged,' said I, 'for months together in long and dangerous marches,—harassed perhaps in his rear to-day, harassing others to-morrow; detached here, countermanded there; resting this night out upon his arms, beat up in his shirt the next, benumbed in his joints, perhaps without straw in his tent to kneel on,—must say his prayers how and when he can, I believe,' said I—for I was piqued," quoth the Corporal, "for the reputation of the army—'I believe, an' please your Reverence,' said I, 'that when a soldier gets time to pray, he prays as heartily as a parson, though not with all his fuss and hypocrisy.'"—"Thou shouldst not have said that, Trim," said my Uncle Toby, "for God only knows who is a hypocrite and who is not. At the great and general review of us all, Corporal, at the Day of Judgment (and not till then), it will be seen who have done their duties in this world and who have not; and we shall be advanced, Trim, accordingly."—"I hope we shall," said Trim.—"It is in the Scripture," said my Uncle Toby, "and I will show it thee to-morrow; in the mean time we may depend upon it, Trim, for our comfort," said my Uncle Toby, "that God Almighty is so good and just a governor of the world, that if we have but done our duties in it, it will never be inquired into whether we have done them in a red coat or a black one."—"I hope not," said the Corporal.—"But go on, Trim," said my Uncle Toby, "with thy story."

"When I went up," continued the Corporal, "into the lieutenant's room, which I did not do until the expiration of the ten minutes, he was lying in his bed with his head raised upon his hand, with his elbow upon the pillow, and a clean white cambric handkerchief beside it. The youth was just stooping down to take up the cushion, upon which I supposed he had been kneeling; the book was laid upon the bed; and as he rose, in taking up the cushion with one hand, he reached out his other to take it away at the same time. 'Let it remain there, my dear,' said the lieutenant.

"He did not offer to speak to me till I had walked up close to his bedside. 'If you are Captain Shandy's servant,' said he, 'you must present my thanks to your master, with my little boy's thanks along with them, for his courtesy to me: if he was of Leven's,' said the lieutenant — I told him your Honor was — 'then,' said he, 'I served three campaigns with him in Flanders, and remember him; but 'tis most likely, as I had not the honor of any acquaintance with him, that he knows nothing of me. You will tell him, however, that the person his good-nature has laid under obligations to him is one Le Fevre, a lieutenant in Angus's — but he knows me not,' said he a second time, musing. 'Possibly he may my story,' added he. 'Pray tell the captain I was the ensign at Breda whose wife was most unfortunately killed with a musket-shot as she lay in my arms in my tent.' — 'I remember the story, an' please your Honor,' said I, 'very well.' — 'Do you so?' said he, wiping his eyes with his handkerchief; 'then well may I.' In saying this he drew a little ring out of his bosom, which seemed tied with a black ribbon about his neck, and kissed it twice. 'Here, Billy,' said he. The boy flew across the room to the bedside, and falling down upon his knee, took the ring in his hand and kissed it too, then kissed his father, and sat down upon the bed and wept."

"I wish," said my Uncle Toby with a deep sigh, "I wish, Trim, I was asleep."

"Your Honor," replied the Corporal, "is too much concerned. Shall I pour your Honor out a glass of sack to your pipe?" — "Do, Trim," said my Uncle Toby.

"I remember," said my Uncle Toby, sighing again, "the story of the ensign and his wife; and particularly well, that he, as well as she, upon some account or other (I forget what), was universally pitied by the whole regiment. But finish the story thou art upon." — "'Tis finished already," said the Corporal, "for I could stay no longer, so wished his Honor a good night: young Le Fevre rose from off the bed, and saw me to the bottom of the stairs; and as we went down together, told me they had come from Ireland, and were on their route to join the regiment in Flanders. « But alas! » said the Corporal, « the lieutenant's last day's march is over.» — « Then what is to become of his poor boy? » cried my Uncle Toby.

It was to my Uncle Toby's eternal honor — though I tell it only for the sake of those who, when cooped in betwixt a natural and a positive law, know not for their souls which way in the world to turn themselves — that notwithstanding my Uncle Toby was warmly engaged at that time in carrying on the siege of Dendermond parallel with the Allies, who pressed theirs on so vigorously that they scarce allowed him time to get his dinner, that nevertheless he gave up Dendermond, though he had already made a lodgment upon the counterscarp, and bent his whole thoughts towards the private distresses at the inn; and except that he ordered the garden gate to be bolted up, by which he might be said to have turned the siege of Dendermond into a blockade, he left Dendermond to itself, to be relieved or not by the French king as the French king thought good; and only considered how he himself should relieve the poor lieutenant and his son.

That kind Being who is a friend to the friendless shall recompense thee for this.

« Thou hast left this matter short,» said my Uncle Toby to the Corporal as he was putting him to bed, « and I will tell thee in what, Trim. In the first place, when thou madest an offer of my services to Le Fevre, as sickness and traveling are both expensive, and thou knewest he was but a poor lieutenant, with a son to subsist as well as himself out of his pay, that thou didst not make an offer to him of my purse; because, had he stood in need, thou knowest, Trim, he had been as welcome to it as myself.» — « Your Honor knows,» said the Corporal, « I had no orders.» — « True,» quoth my Uncle Toby: « thou didst very right, Trim, as a soldier, but certainly very wrong as a man.»

« In the second place, for which indeed thou hast the same excuse,» continued my Uncle Toby, « when thou offeredst him whatever was in my house, thou shouldst have offered him my house too. A sick brother officer should have the best quarters, Trim; and if we had him with us, we could tend and look to him. Thou art an excellent nurse thyself, Trim; and what with thy care of him, and the old woman's, and his boy's, and mine together, we might recruit him again at once, and set him upon his legs.

«In a fortnight or three weeks,» added my Uncle Toby, smiling, «he might march.» — «He will never march, an' please your Honor, in this world,» said the Corporal. — «He will march,» said my Uncle Toby, rising up from the side of the bed with one shoe off. — «An' please your Honor,» said the Corporal, «he will never march but to his grave.» — «He shall march,» cried my Uncle Toby, marching the foot which had a shoe on, though without advancing an inch, «he shall march to his regiment.» — «He cannot stand it,» said the Corporal. — «He shall be supported,» said my Uncle Toby. — «He'll drop at last,» said the Corporal, «and what will become of his boy?» — «He shall not drop,» said my Uncle Toby firmly. — «Ah, well-a-day, do what we can for him,» said Trim, maintaining his point, «the poor soul will die.» — «He shall not die, by G——,» cried my Uncle Toby.

The Accusing Spirit which flew up to heaven's chancery with the oath, blushed as he gave it in; and the Recording Angel, as he wrote it down, dropped a tear upon the word, and blotted it out forever.

My Uncle Toby went to his bureau, put his purse into his breeches pocket, and having ordered the Corporal to go early in the morning for a physician, he went to bed and fell asleep.

The sun looked bright the morning after, to every eye in the village but Le Fevre's and his afflicted son's; the hand of death pressed heavy upon his eyelids; and hardly could the wheel of the cistern turn round its circle, when my Uncle Toby, who had rose up an hour before his wonted time, entered the lieutenant's room, and without preface or apology sat himself down upon the chair by the bedside, and independently of all modes and customs, opened the curtain in the manner an old friend and brother officer would have done it, and asked him how he did, how he had rested in the night, what was his complaint, where was his pain, and what he could do to help him? And without giving him time to answer any one of the inquiries, went on and told him of the little plan which he had been concerting with the Corporal the night before for him.

«But you shall go home directly, Le Fevre,» said my Uncle Toby, «to my house, and we'll send for a doctor to see what's the matter, and we'll have an apothecary, and the Corporal shall be your nurse, and I'll be your servant, Le Fevre."

There was a frankness in my Uncle Toby — not the effect of familiarity, but the cause of it — which let you at once into his soul, and showed you the goodness of his nature. To this there was something in his looks and voice and manner superadded, which eternally beckoned to the unfortunate to come and take shelter under him. So that before my Uncle Toby had half finished the kind offers he was making to the father, had the son insensibly pressed up close to his knees, and had taken hold of the breast of his coat, and was pulling it towards him. The blood and spirits of Le Fevre, which were waxing cold and slow within him, and were retreating to the last citadel, the heart, rallied back. The film forsook his eyes for a moment. He looked up wistfully in my Uncle Toby's face, then cast a look upon his boy; and that ligament, fine as it was, was never broken.

Nature instantly ebbed again. The film returned to its place; the pulse fluttered, stopped, went on — throbbed, stopped again — moved, stopped — Shall I go on? No.

I AM so impatient to return to my own story that what remains of young Le Fevre's — that is, from this turn of his fortune to the time my Uncle Toby recommended him for my preceptor — shall be told in a very few words in the next chapter. All that is necessary to be added to this chapter is as follows: —

That my Uncle Toby, with young Le Fevre in his hand, attended the poor lieutenant as chief mourners to his grave.

THE START

From 'A Sentimental Journey through France and Italy'

"THEY order," said I, "this matter better in France — "

"You have been in France?" said my gentleman, turning quick upon me, with the most civil triumph in the world.

"Strange!" quoth I, debating the matter with myself, "that one-and-twenty miles' sailing (for 'tis absolutely no further from Dover to Calais) should give a man these rights — I'll look into them:" so, giving up the argument, I went straight to my lodgings, put up half a dozen shirts and a black pair of silk breeches — « the coat I have on,» said I, looking at the sleeve, « will do » — took a place in the Dover stage; and the packet sailing at nine the next morning, by three I had got sat down to my dinner upon a fricasseed chicken, so incontestably in France that had I died that night of an indigestion, the whole world could not have suspended the effects of the *droits d'aubaine:* my shirts, and black pair of silk breeches, portmanteau, and all, must have gone to the King of France; even the little picture which I have so long worn, and so often have told thee, Eliza, I would carry with me to my grave, would have been torn from my neck.—Ungenerous! — to seize upon the wreck of an unwary passenger, whom your subjects had beckoned to their coast! — by heaven! sire, it is not well done; and much does it grieve me, 'tis the monarch of a people so civilized and courteous, and so renowned for sentiment and fine feelings, that I have to reason with —

But I have scarce set foot in your dominions —

When I had finished my dinner, and drank the King of France's health, to satisfy my mind that I bore him no spleen, but on the contrary, high honor for the humanity of his temper, I rose up an inch taller for the accommodation.

— « No,» said I, « the Bourbon is by no means a cruel race: they may be misled, like other people, but there is a mildness in their blood.» As I acknowledged this, I felt a suffusion of a finer kind upon my cheek, more warm and friendly to man than what burgundy (at least of two livres a bottle, which was such as I had been drinking) could have produced.

— « Just God! » said I, kicking my portmanteau aside, « what is there in this world's goods which should sharpen our spirits. and make so many kind-hearted brethren of us fall out so cruelly as we do by the way? »

When man is at peace with man, how much lighter than a feather is the heaviest of metals in his hand! He pulls out his purse, and holding it airily and uncompressed, looks round him as if he sought for an object to share it with. In doing this, I felt every vessel in my frame dilate — the arteries beat all cheerily together — and every power which sustained life performed it with so little friction that 'twould have confounded the most *physical précieuse* in France: with all her materialism, she could scarce have called me a machine —

"I'm confident," said I to myself, "I should have overset her creed."

The accession of that idea carried Nature, at that time, as high as she could go.—I was at peace with the world before, and this finished the treaty with myself—

—"Now, was I a King of France," cried I, "what a moment for an orphan to have begged his father's portmanteau of me!"

THE MONK

From ‹A Sentimental Journey›

I HAD scarce uttered the words, when a poor monk of the order of St. Francis came into the room to beg something for his convent. . . .

The moment I cast my eyes upon him, I was predetermined not to give him a single sous; and accordingly I put up my purse into my pocket, buttoned it up, set myself a little more upon my centre, and advanced up gravely to him; there was something, I fear, forbidding in my look: I have his figure this moment before my eyes, and think there was that in it which deserved better.

The monk, as I judged from the break in his tonsure (a few scattered white hairs upon his temples being all that remained of it), might be about seventy; but from his eyes, and that sort of fire which was in them, which seemed more tempered by courtesy than years, could be no more than sixty;—truth might lie between;—he was certainly sixty-five; and the general air of his countenance, notwithstanding something seemed to have been planting wrinkles in it before their time, agreed to the account.

It was one of those heads which Guido has often painted,—mild, pale, penetrating,—free from all commonplace ideas of fat contented ignorance looking downwards upon the earth,—it looked forwards; but looked as if it looked at something beyond this world. How one of his order came by it, Heaven above, who let it fall upon a monk's shoulders, best knows; but it would have suited a Brahmin; and had I met it upon the plains of Hindostan, I had reverenced it.

The rest of his outline may be given in a few strokes; one might put it into the hands of any one to design, for 'twas neither elegant nor otherwise, but as character and expression made it so: it was a thin, spare form, something above the common size, if it lost not the distinction by a bend forward in the figure — but it was the attitude of entreaty; and as it now stands presented to my imagination, it gained more than it lost by it.

When he had entered the room three paces, he stood still; and laying his left hand upon his breast (a slender white staff with which he journeyed being in his right), when I had got close up to him he introduced himself with the little story of the wants of his convent, and the poverty of his order; and did it with so simple a grace, and such an air of deprecation was there in the whole cast of his look and figure, I was bewitched not to have been struck with it.

A better reason was, I had predetermined not to give him a single sous.

"'Tis very true," said I, replying to a cast upwards with his eyes, with which he had concluded his address — "'tis very true — and Heaven be their resource who have no other but the charity of the world; the stock of which, I fear, is no way sufficient for the many *great claims* which are hourly made upon it."

As I pronounced the words "*great claims*," he gave a slight glance with his eye downward upon the sleeve of his tunic. — I felt the full force of the appeal. — "I acknowledge it," said I; "a coarse habit, and that but once in three years, with meagre diet, are no great matters: and the true point of pity is, as they can be earned in the world with so little industry, that your order should wish to procure them by pressing upon a fund which is the property of the lame, the blind, the aged, and the infirm; the captive who lies down counting over and over again the days of his afflictions, languishes also for his share of it; — and had you been of the *order of mercy* instead of the order of St. Francis, poor as I am," continued I, pointing to my portmanteau, "full cheerfully should it have been opened to you for the ransom of the unfortunate." — The monk made me a bow. — "But of all others," resumed I, "the unfortunate of our own country surely have the first rights; and I have left thousands in distress upon our own shore." — The monk gave a cordial wave with his head, as much as to say, "No doubt there is misery enough in every corner of the world, as well as within our convent." — "But we distinguish," said I, laying my hand upon the sleeve of his tunic, in return for his appeal, — "we distinguish, my good father, betwixt those who wish only to eat the bread of their own labors, and those who eat the bread of other people's, and have no other plan in life but to get through it in sloth and ignorance *for the love of God.*»

The poor Franciscan made no reply: — a hectic of a moment passed across his cheek, but could not tarry; — Nature seemed to have had done with her resentments in him: — he showed none; but letting his staff fall within his arm, he pressed both his hands with resignation upon his breast, and retired.

My heart smote me the moment he shut the door. — «Pshaw!» said I, with an air of carelessness, three several times, — but it would not do; every ungracious syllable I had uttered crowded back into my imagination. I reflected, I had no right over the poor Franciscan but to deny him; and that the punishment of that was enough to the disappointed without the addition of unkind language. — I considered his gray hairs; his courteous figure seemed to re-enter, and gently ask me what injury he had done me, and why I could use him thus: I would have given twenty livres for an advocate. — «I have behaved very ill,» said I within myself; «but I have only just set out upon my travels, and shall learn better manners as I get along.» . . .

I feel a damp upon my spirits, as I am going to add that in my last return through Calais, upon inquiring after Father Lorenzo, I heard that he had been dead near three months; and was buried, not in his convent, but according to his desire, in a little cemetery belonging to it, about two leagues off. I had a strong desire to see where they had laid him — when, upon pulling out his little horn box, as I sat by his grave, and plucking up a nettle or two at the head of it, which had no business to grow there, they all struck together so forcibly upon my affections, that I burst into a flood of tears: but I am as weak as a woman; and I beg the world not to smile, but pity me.

THE DEAD ASS

From ‹A Sentimental Journey›

«And this,» said he, putting the remains of a crust into his wallet, — «and this should have been thy portion,» said he, «hadst thou been alive to have shared it with me.» I thought, by the accent, it had been an apostrophe to his child; but 'twas to his ass, and to the very ass we had seen dead in the road, which had occasioned La Fleur's misadventure. The man seemed to lament it much: and it instantly brought into my mind Sancho's lamentation for his; but he did it with more true touches of nature.

The mourner was sitting upon a stone bench at the door, with the ass's pannel and its bridle on one side, which he took up from time to time — then laid them down — looked at them, and shook his head. He then took his crust of bread out of his wallet again, as if to eat it; held it some time in his hand; then laid it upon the bit of his ass's bridle, looked wistfully at the little arrangement he had made, and then gave a sigh.

The simplicity of his grief drew numbers about him, and La Fleur amongst the rest, whilst the horses were getting ready: as I continued sitting in the post-chaise, I could see and hear over their heads.

— He said he had come last from Spain, where he had been from the furthest borders of Franconia; and had got so far on his return home, when his ass died. Every one seemed desirous to know what business could have taken so old and poor a man so far a journey from his own home.

It had pleased Heaven, he said, to bless him with three sons, the finest lads in all Germany; but having in one week lost two of the eldest of them by the small-pox, and the youngest falling ill of the same distemper, he was afraid of being bereft of them all; and made a vow, if Heaven would not take him from him also, he would go in gratitude to St. Iago in Spain.

When the mourner got thus far on his story, he stopped to pay nature his tribute, and wept bitterly.

He said Heaven had accepted the conditions; and that he had set out from his cottage with this poor creature, which had been a patient partner of his journey; that it had ate the same bread with him all the way, and was unto him as a friend.

Everybody who stood about heard the poor fellow with concern. La Fleur offered him money. The mourner said he did not want it: it was not the value of the ass, but the loss of him. The ass, he said, he was assured, loved him: and upon this, told them a long story of a mischance upon their passage over the Pyrenean mountains, which had separated them from each other three days; during which time the ass had sought him as much as he had sought the ass, and that they had scarce either ate or drank till they met.

«Thou hast one comfort, friend,» said I, «at least, in the loss of thy poor beast: I'm sure thou hast been a merciful master to him.»—«Alas!» said the mourner, «I thought so when he was alive: but now that he is dead, I think otherwise; I fear that the weight of myself and my afflictions together have been too much for him,—they have shortened the poor creature's days, and I fear I have them to answer for.»—«Shame on the world!» said I to myself. «Did we but love each other as this poor soul loved his ass—'twould be something.»

THE PULSE

PARIS

From ‹A Sentimental Journey›

Hail, ye small sweet courtesies of life! for smooth do ye make the road of it; like grace and beauty, which beget inclinations to love at first sight: 'tis ye who open this door, and let the stranger in.

—«Pray, madam,» said I, «have the goodness to tell me which way I must turn to go to the Opéra Comique?»

«Most willingly, monsieur,» said she, laying aside her work.

I had given a cast with my eye into half a dozen shops as I came along, in search of a face not likely to be disordered by such an interruption; till at last, this hitting my fancy, I had walked in.

She was working a pair of ruffles as she sat in a low chair on the far side of the shop, facing the door.

«*Très volontiers*—most willingly,» said she, laying her work down upon a chair next her, and rising up from the low chair she was sitting in, with so cheerful a movement and so cheerful a look that had I been laying out fifty louis d'ors with her, I should have said, «That woman is grateful.»

«You must turn, monsieur,» said she, going with me to the door of the shop, and pointing the way down the street I was to take—«you must turn first to your right hand,—*mais prenez garde*, there are two turns, and be so good as to take the second,—then go down a little way, and you'll see a church; and when you are past it, give yourself the trouble to turn directly to the right, and that will lead you to the foot of the Pont-Neuf, which you must cross, and there any one will do himself the pleasure to show you."

She repeated her instructions three times over to me, with the same good-natured patience the third time as the first; and if *tones* and *manners* have a meaning,—which certainly they have, unless to hearts which shut them out,—she seemed really interested that I should not lose myself.

I will not suppose it was the woman's beauty (notwithstanding she was the handsomest *grisette*, I think, I ever saw) which had much to do with the sense I had of her courtesy; only I remember when I told her how much I was obliged to her, that I looked very full in her eyes, and that I repeated my thanks as often as she had done her instructions.

I had not got ten paces from the door, before I found I had forgot every tittle of what she had said; so looking back, and seeing her still standing in the door of the shop, as if to look whether I went right or not, I returned back to ask her whether the first turn was to my right or left, for that I had absolutely forgot.

"It is impossible!" said she, half laughing.

"'Tis very possible," replied I, "when a man is thinking more of a woman than of her good advice."

As this was the real truth, she took it, as every woman takes a matter of right, with a slight courtesy.

—"*Attendez!*" said she, laying her hand upon my arm to detain me, whilst she called a lad out of the back shop to get ready a parcel of gloves. "I am just going to send him," said she, "with a packet into that quarter; and if you will have the complaisance to step in, it will be ready in a moment, and he shall attend you to the place."

So I walked in with her to the far side of the shop; and taking up the ruffle in my hand which she laid upon the chair, as if I had a mind to sit, she sat down herself in her low chair, and I instantly sat myself down beside her.

—"He will be ready, monsieur," said she, "in a moment."

"And in that moment," replied I, "most willingly would I say something very civil to you for all these courtesies. Any one may do a casual act of good-nature, but a continuation of them shows it is a part of the temperature; and certainly," added I, "if it is the same blood which comes from the heart which descends to the extremes» (touching her wrist), «I am sure you must have one of the best pulses of any woman in the world.»

«Feel it,» said she, holding out her arm.

So laying down my hat, I took hold of her fingers in one hand, and applied the two forefingers of my other to the artery.

—Would to Heaven! my dear Eugenius, thou hadst passed by and beheld me sitting in my black coat, and in my lackadaisical manner counting the throbs of it, one by one, with as much true devotion as if I had been watching the critical ebb or flow of her fever: how wouldst thou have laughed and moralized upon my new profession!—and thou shouldst have laughed and moralized on. Trust me, my dear Eugenius, I should have said, «There are worse occupations in this world *than feeling a woman's pulse.*»—«But a *grisette's!*» thou wouldst have said; «and in an open shop! Yorick»—

—«So much the better: for when my views are direct, Eugenius, I care not if all the world saw me feel it.»

I had counted twenty pulsations, and was going on fast towards the fortieth, when her husband, coming unexpected from a back parlor into the shop, put me a little out of my reckoning. «'Twas nobody but her husband,» she said;—so I began a fresh score.

«Monsieur is so good,» quoth she as he passed by us, «as to give himself the trouble of feeling my pulse.»

The husband took off his hat, and making me a bow, said I did him too much honor; and having said that, he put on his hat and walked out.

«Good God!» said I to myself as he went out, «and can this man be the husband of this woman?»

Let it not torment the few who know what must have been the grounds of this exclamation, if I explain it to those who do not.

In London, a shopkeeper and a shopkeeper's wife seem to be one bone and one flesh: in the several endowments of mind and body, sometimes the one, sometimes the other, has it, so as in general to be upon a par, and to tally with each other as nearly as man and wife need to do.

In Paris, there are scarce two orders of beings more different: for the legislative and executive powers of the shop not resting in the husband, he seldom comes there; in some dark and dismal room behind, he sits commerceless in his thrum nightcap, the same rough son of Nature that Nature left him.

The genius of a people where nothing but the monarchy is *salique*, having ceded this department, with sundry others, totally to the women,—by a continual higgling with customers of all ranks and sizes from morning to night, like so many rough pebbles shook along together in a bag, by amicable collisions they have worn down their asperities and sharp angles, and not only become round and smooth, but will receive, some of them, a polish like a brilliant;—Monsieur le Mari is little better than the stone under your foot.

—Surely, surely, man! it is not good for thee to sit alone; thou wast made for social intercourse and gentle greetings; and this improvement of our natures from it I appeal to as my evidence.

—«And how does it beat, monsieur?» said she.

«With all the benignity,» said I, looking quietly in her eyes, «that I expected.»

She was going to say something civil in return, but the lad came into the shop with the gloves.

«Àpropos,» said I, «I want a couple of pairs myself.»

THE STARLING

From ‹A Sentimental Journey›

I WAS interrupted in the heyday of this soliloquy with a voice which I took to be that of a child, which complained it could not get out. I looked up and down the passage, and seeing neither man, woman, nor child, I went out without further attention.

In my return back through the passage, I heard the same words repeated twice over, and looking up, I saw it was a starling hung in a little cage. «I can't get out! I can't get out!» said the starling.

I stood looking at the bird; and to every person who came through the passage it ran fluttering to the side towards which they approached it, with the same lamentation of its captivity. «I can't get out!» said the starling.

«God help thee!» said I, «but I'll help thee out, cost what it will;» so I turned about the cage to get to the door;—it was twisted and double twisted so fast with wire, there was no getting it open without pulling the cage to pieces. I took both hands to it.

The bird flew to the place where I was attempting his deliverance, and thrusting his head through the trellis, pressed his breast against it as if impatient.

"I fear, poor creature," said I, "I cannot set thee at liberty."

"No," said the starling; "I can't get out! I can't get out!" said the starling.

I vow I never had my affections more tenderly awakened; nor do I remember an incident in my life where the dissipated spirits, to which my reason had been a bubble, were so suddenly called home. Mechanical as the notes were, yet so true in tune to nature were they chanted, that in one moment they overthrew all my systematic reasonings upon the Bastile; and I heavily walked up-stairs, unsaying every word I had said in going down them.

"Disguise thyself as thou wilt, still, Slavery," said I,—"still thou art a bitter draught! and though thousands in all ages have been made to drink thee, thou art no less bitter on that account. 'Tis thou, thrice sweet and gracious goddess," addressing myself to Liberty, "whom all in public or in private worship; whose taste is grateful, and ever will be so, till Nature herself shall change. No tint of words can spot thy snowy mantle, or chemic power turn thy sceptre into iron; with thee to smile upon him as he eats his crust, the swain is happier than his monarch from whose court thou art exiled. Gracious Heaven!" cried I, kneeling down upon the last step but one in my ascent, "grant me but health, thou great Bestower of it, and give me but this fair goddess as my companion; and shower down thy mitres, if it seems good unto thy Divine providence, upon those heads which are aching for them."

The bird in his cage pursued me into my room. I sat down close to my table, and leaning my head upon my hand, I began to figure to myself the miseries of confinement. I was in a right frame for it, and so I gave full scope to my imagination.

I was going to begin with the millions of my fellow-creatures born to no inheritance but slavery; but finding, however affecting the picture was, that I could not bring it near me, and that the multitudes of sad groups in it did but distract me,—I took a single captive, and having first shut him up in his dungeon, I then looked through the twilight of his grated door to take his picture.

I beheld his body half wasted away with long expectation and confinement, and felt what kind of sickness of heart it is which arises from hope deferred. Upon looking nearer, I saw him pale and feverish: in thirty years, the western breeze had not once fanned his blood; he had seen no sun, no moon, in all that time, nor had the voice of friend or kinsman breathed through his lattice! — his children —

But here my heart began to bleed, and I was forced to go on with another part of the portrait.

He was sitting upon the ground, upon a little straw in the furthest corner of his dungeon, which was alternately his chair and bed: a little calendar of small sticks was laid at the head, notched all over with the dismal days and nights he had passed there; he had one of these little sticks in his hand, and with a rusty nail he was etching another day of misery to add to the heap.

As I darkened the little light he had, he lifted up a hopeless eye towards the door; then cast it down, shook his head, and went on with his work of affliction. I heard his chains upon his legs, as he turned his body to lay his little stick upon the bundle. He gave a deep sigh. — I saw the iron enter into his soul!

— I burst into tears. — I could not sustain the picture of confinement which my fancy had drawn. I started up from my chair, and calling La Fleur, I bid him bespeak me a *remise*, and have it ready at the door of the hotel by nine in the morning.

« I'll go directly, » said I to myself, « to Monsieur le Duc le Choiseul. »

La Fleur would have put me to bed; but not willing he should see anything upon my cheek which would cost the honest fellow a heartache, I told him I would go to bed myself, and bid him do the same.

I got into my *remise* the hour I proposed; La Fleur got up behind, and I bid the coachman make the best of his way to Versailles.

As there was nothing in this road, or rather nothing which I look for in traveling, I cannot fill up the blank better than with a short history of this selfsame bird, which became the subject of the last chapter.

Whilst the Honorable Mr. —— was waiting for a wind at Dover, it had been caught upon the cliffs, before it could well fly, by an English lad who was his groom: who not caring to destroy it, had taken it in his breast into the packet; and by course of feeding it, and taking it once under his protection, in a day or two grew fond of it, and got it safe along with him to Paris.

At Paris, the lad had laid out a livre in a little cage for the starling; and as he had little to do better, the five months his master stayed there, he taught it in his mother's tongue the four simple words (and no more) to which I owed myself so much its debtor.

Upon his master's going on for Italy the lad had given it to the master of the hotel.

But his little song for liberty being in an unknown language at Paris, the bird had little or no store set by him; so La Fleur bought him and his cage for me for a bottle of burgundy.

In my return from Italy, I brought him with me to the country in whose language he had learned his notes; and telling the story of him to Lord A, Lord A begged the bird of me; in a week Lord A gave him to Lord B; Lord B made a present of him to Lord C; and Lord C's gentleman sold him to Lord D's for a shilling; Lord D gave him to Lord E; and so on — half round the alphabet. From that rank he passed into the lower house, and passed the hands of as many commoners. But as all these wanted to get in, and my bird wanted to get out, he had almost as little store set by him in London as at Paris.

It is impossible but many of my readers must have heard of him; and if any by mere chance have ever seen him, I beg leave to inform them that that bird was my bird, or some vile copy set up to represent him.

I have nothing farther to add upon him, but that from that time to this I have borne this poor starling as the crest to my arms: — And let the herald's officers twist his neck about if they dare.

IN LANGUEDOC: AN IDYL

From ‹A Sentimental Journey›

'Twas in the road betwixt Nismes and Lunel, where there is the best Muscatto wine in all France — and which, by-the-by, belongs to the honest canons of Montpellier; and foul befall the man who has drank it at their table, who grudges them a drop of it.

The sun was set — they had done their work; the nymphs had tied up their hair afresh, and the swains were preparing for a carousal. My mule made a dead point. — «'Tis the fife and tambourin,» said I. — «I'm frightened to death,» quoth he. — «They are running at the ring of pleasure,» said I, giving him a prick. — «By St. Boogar, and all the saints at the back-side of the door of purgatory,» said he (making the same resolution with the Abbess of Andouillets), «I'll not go a step further.» — «'Tis very well, sir,» said I: «I will never argue a point with one of your family as long as I live.» So leaping off his back, and kicking off one boot into this ditch and t'other into that — «I'll take a dance,» said I, «so stay you here.»

A sunburnt daughter of labor rose up from the group to meet me, as I advanced towards them; her hair — which was a dark chestnut, approaching rather to a black — was tied up in a knot, all but a single tress.

«We want a cavalier,» said she, holding out both her hands as if to offer them. — «And a cavalier ye shall have,» said I, taking hold of both of them.

«Hadst thou, Nannette, been arrayed like a duchess! But that cursed slit in thy petticoat!»

Nannette cared not for it.

«We could not have done without you,» said she, letting go one hand, with self-taught politeness, leading me up with the other.

A lame youth, whom Apollo had recompensed with a pipe, and to which he had added a tambourin of his own accord, ran sweetly over the prelude, as he sat upon the bank. — «Tie me up this tress instantly,» said Nannette, putting a piece of string into my hand. It taught me to forget I was a stranger. — The whole knot fell down. We had been seven years acquainted.

The youth struck the note upon the tambourin, his pipe followed, and off we bounded.—"The deuce take that slit!" . . .

The sister of the youth who had stolen her voice from heaven sung alternately with her brother, 'twas a Gascoigne roundelay—

Viva la joia!
Fidon la tristessa!

The nymphs joined in unison, and their swains an octave below them.

I would have given a crown to have it sewed up: Nannette would not have given a sous; *Viva la joia!* was in her lips—*Viva la joia!* was in her eyes. A transient spark of amity shot across the space betwixt us. She looked amiable. Why could I not live and end my days thus? "Just Disposer of our joys and sorrows," cried I, "why could not a man sit down in the lap of content here, and dance and sing, and say his prayers, and go to heaven with this nut-brown maid?" Capriciously did she bend her head on one side, and dance up insidious. "Then 'tis time to dance off," quoth I.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

(1850–1894)

BY ROBERT BRIDGES

In his illuminating essay ‹The Lantern-Bearers,› which in a very few pages seems to bear the secret of Robert Louis Stevenson's life and art, he puts the kernel of it in the sentence: «No man lives in the external truth, among salts and acids; but in the warm, phantasmagoric chamber of his brain, with the painted windows and the storied walls.» If he was the most loved writer of his generation, it was because he freely gave his readers access to this warm phantasmagoric chamber. His «winning personality» is the phrase which his admirers use oftenest to express his charm. One of the most acute of these, Mr. Henry James, has still further defined this charm as the perpetual boy in him. He never outgrew the boy's delight in «make-believe.» He tells how the cardboard scenery and plays of Skelt, «A Penny Plain, 2*d.* Colored,» which fascinated him as a boy, had given him «the very spirit of my life's enjoyment.» Boy and man, all that he needed for delight was «a peg for his fancy.» «I could not learn my alphabet without some suitable *mise-en-scène*, and had to act a business man in an office before I could sit down to my book.» Burnt-cork mustachios expanded his spirit with «dignity and self-reliance.» To him the burnt cork was not the significant thing, the warm delight of it. It is not the silly talk of the boys on the links, or the ill-smelling lantern buttoned under their great-coats, but «the heaven of a recondite pleasure» which they inhabit, that is worth considering. «To find out where joy resides, and give it a voice far beyond singing,»—that was Stevenson's endeavor; «for to miss the joy is to miss all. In the joy of the actors lies the sense of any action.» That is the very spirit of romantic youth; the search for «the incommunicable thrill of things,» which his friend and biographer Sidney Colvin says was the main passion of Stevenson's

R. L. Stevenson

life. «To his ardent fancy,» says Colvin, «the world was a theatre, glaring with the lights and bustling with the incidents of romance.»

To any one looking for the reason of Stevenson's perpetual charm, — even to those who can give a score of arguments for not liking his romances, — this brave spirit of youth is an adequate and satisfying motive. The young find in it a full justification for their own hopes; the middle-aged feel again the very spring and core of the energy which they have been so long disciplining and driving to the yoke of every-day effort that they have forgotten its origin; and the old find their memories alive and glowing again with the romance of youth. In sickness or in health, in comedy or tragedy, Stevenson and the characters he creates are never wholly unconscious of man's inalienable birthright of happiness. No matter how dire his circumstances, it is a man's duty to keep looking for it, so that at the end he may say that he has not sold his birthright for a mess of pottage.

«If I have faltered more or less
In my great task of happiness;
If I have moved among my race
And shown no glorious morning face;
If beams from happy human eyes
Have moved me not; if morning skies,
Books and my food, and summer rain,
Knocked on my sullen heart in vain,—
Lord, thy most pointed pleasure take
And stab my spirit broad awake.»

This temperament in many men of a different race would surely lead to a life spent in the pursuit of pleasure, — in one long quest for new sensations, — which in the end is sure to arrive at ennui and disgust. But Stevenson united the blood of the Balfours, who were preachers, given to metaphysics and the pursuit of moralities, with the Stevensons, «builders of the great sea lights,» practical men of trained scientific minds and shrewd common-sense. The touch of the moral philosopher was never deeply hidden in his lightest work, which also showed the hand of the artisan in the skill of its construction. «What I want to give, what I try for, is God's moral,» he once said; and 'Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde' is a potent exhibition of it. How very early in life this temperament began to reveal itself in the craftsman, he shows in one of his essays: «All through my boyhood and youth I was known and pointed out for the pattern of an idler; and yet I was always busy in my own private end, which was to learn to write. I always kept two books in my pocket, one to read and one to write in. As I walked, my mind was busy fitting what I saw with appropriate words. . . . I lived with words, and what I thus wrote was for no ulterior use; it was written consciously for practice. It was not so much that I wished to be an author (though I wished that too), as that I had vowed that I would learn to write.» And years afterward he wrote to Colvin from Samoa: «I pass all my hours of field-work in continual converse and imaginary correspondence. I scarce pull up a weed but I invent a sentence on the matter to yourself.»

In his youthful reading, «some happy distinction in the style» of a book sent him at once to the imitation of it; and he confesses, «I have thus played the sedulous ape to Hazlitt, to Lamb, to Wordsworth, to Sir Thomas Browne, to Defoe, to Hawthorne, to Montaigne, to Baudelaire, and to Obermann.» All this gave him what he knew to be «the lower and less intellectual elements of the art,— the choice of the essential note and the right word»; but he also knew that «*that*, like it or not, is the way to learn to write.» To those who say that this is not the way to be original, he has given the best answer: «It is not; nor is there any way but to be born so. Nor yet if you are born original, is there anything in this training that shall clip the wings of your originality.»

The «love of lovely words» was one of his passions. From Skerryvore to Vailima it led him and charmed him. In ‘Across the Plains’ he says that «None can care for literature in itself who do not take a special pleasure in the sound of names»; and notes the poetical richness and picturesqueness of many in the United States. In his ‘Vailima Letters’ he recurs again and again to the liquid beauty of the Samoan language, and names «Ulufanua»: «Did ever you hear a prettier word?» he asks. There was the ear of a poet always evident in his prose as in his verse.

If Stevenson is always spoken of as a man with a style, here is the reason for it. The spirit of the light-house builders, who knew that something more than inspiration was necessary to build a beacon that would stand up against the waves, was strong in him. From his boyhood to his death he was a conscious artificer in words. And if his books are to stand as beacons, here is the foundation of solid rock, here the strength of the tower. But no reader of Stevenson need be told the tower is only a stable support for the light. That is a thing of the spirit; and it glows in his works with a steady flame.

With his eagerness to have a full draught of the joy of living, it was natural that Stevenson should have traveled much in many countries. The pursuit of health, which was for twenty years a pressing necessity in his «great task of happiness,» was not the sole reason for his wanderings. He was always hungry for «the greater world; not the shoddy sham world of cities, clubs, and colleges, but the world where men still live a man's life. . . . My imagination, which is not the least damped by the idea of having my head cut off in the bush, recoils aghast from the idea of a life like Gladstone's; and the shadow of the newspaper chills me to the bone.» He looks back with more satisfaction on the things he learned in the streets while playing truant, than on what he retained of books and college lectures. «Books are good enough in their own way, but they are a mighty bloodless substitute for life. It seems a pity to sit, like the Lady of Shalott, peering into a mirror, with your back turned on all the bustle and glamour of reality.»

His wanderings, which were his real education, began soon after his college days. Born on November 13th, 1850, in Edinburgh, he had the usual advantages of children of thrifty people in that intellectual city. He went to private schools, and had long vacations in the East Neuk of Fife,—a country full of romance, and associated with the Balfours, his mother's family. He has given a pleasing glimpse of his vacations there in ‹The Lantern-Bearers,› where he pictures the play of the boys along the cliffs, fronting on the lonely and picturesque Bass Rock, which even then to his eye of fancy still «flew the colors of King James»; and it held its fascination for him until, long years after, in Samoa, he penned one of the most imaginative chapters in ‹David Balfour› to celebrate its weird associations. His career at Edinburgh University was not distinguished. But he was always about his business, «which was learning to write»; and helped to found a short-lived college magazine, which furnishes the topic for a charming bit of autobiography in ‹Memories and Portraits.› Following the traditions of his family, he began to practice the practical elements of a civil engineer by working around the shops that had to do with the light-house business. Soon he declared his distaste for this vocation, telling his father that he wanted to be a writer. As a compromise he was put at the study of law when twenty-one years of age, and kept at it until he became an advocate, —«Writer to the Signet,» as it is phrased in his will. His failing health drove him to the south of France in 1873: and from that time to his death, on December 3d, 1894, he followed his bent for travel; and while seeking health accumulated, in the way he best liked, the materials for his books. Barbizon and the artistic colony there held him for a time; and there he met Mrs. Osbourne, whom he married in 1879. His vagabonding had furnished him the experiences for his first book, ‹An Inland Voyage› (1878), and later, ‹Travels with a Donkey›; and then came his first American trip in 1879, which in after years produced ‹The Amateur Emigrant,› ‹Across the Plains,› and ‹The Silverado Squatters.› There was a period of invalidism—«the land of counterpane»—at Bournemouth, which at length drove him to seek renewed vigor by a winter in the Adirondacks (1887-8); and then he began in June 1888 his voyages on the Pacific, which culminated in his finding the home he delighted in at Apia, Samoa, in 1890. There health came to him again; and with few intervals he led an out-door life, superintending the building of his house, and working with his own hands on his plantation. The strange people, their ways and their politics, became an absorbing interest; and his ‹Vailima Letters› show that his life was full to the utmost. «Do you think I have an empty life?» he wrote Colvin, «or that a man jogging to his club has so much to interest and amuse him!» He laughed at those who pitied his exile, and ascribed the occasional notes of despondency in his letters to physical depression. «I have endured some two-and-forty years without public shame, and had a good time as I did it,» he wrote in a letter which he called «a gloomy ramble,» which came from a twinge of «fine healthy rheumatism.»

These few suggestions of biography are all that need be here noted. His published works and letters are his best biography—which will be rounded out with the collection of unpublished letters and journals which Mr. Sidney Colvin, his literary executor, is engaged upon. Never was a man more frankly autobiographic in his writings; and those who have most carefully read his books need the least to complete the portrait of Stevenson's personality.

The kind of judgment upon his works that Stevenson always welcomed was that of the craftsman. Whether or not you liked one kind of story better than another, did not seem to him significant. The main question with himself always was, Had he achieved the result artistically that he had in mind? He never forgot the ambition of his boyhood,—«his own private end» of learning to write. And while he is hammering away at a new work, no matter what,—of romance, travels, poem, or history,—he stops from time to time to consider whether he has really *done* it. When he despairs of ever getting it right, he is led on again by «that glimmer of faith (or hope) which one learns at this trade,—that somehow and some time, by perpetual staring and glowering and rewriting, order will emerge.» The most useless form of criticism that can be applied to Stevenson's works is of the comparative kind, that shows how far short of certain great names he fell in certain accepted characteristics. It is easy to pile up the strong and effective literary qualities that he does *not* possess. But he has a right to be judged from his own platform: what did he try to do, and did he do it?

He was once asked why he did not write more pretty tales like ‹Will o' the Mill,› why he had abandoned the «honey-dripping» style of his earlier essays and tales? «It's a thing I have often thought over,» he said,—«the problem of what to do with one's talents.» His own gift, he averred, lay in «the grim and terrible.» He added that some writers touch the heart; he clutched at the throat. If his romances are full of grim and terrible scenes, it is because he believed that he could do that kind of writing best. He wanted to make the most of his best talent. Alan Breck's great fight in the round-house, the duel scene in ‹The Master of Ballantrae,› the terrible slaughter on shipboard in ‹The Wrecker,› are convincing proof that he did not misjudge the bent of his genius. He was the leader in the revival of romantic writing, and yet he proclaims that he is essentially a realist. Life is what he was after: «Life is all in all.» If there is grimness and horror in his books, it is because he saw it in life. This is a strange paradox in one who declared that joy in life was the essential thing. Yet if you analyze any one of Stevenson's terrible episodes, you will find that some character is giving the freest expression to his nature in that scene. Alan Breck gloried in the delight of battle. Wiltshire found barbaric joy in the slaughter of his enemy. A scene in Stevenson may be dire and terrible, but in it some barbaric passion is finding its fullest relief.

In a letter written in 1892 he passes this judgment on his work: «‹Falesá› and ‹David Balfour› seem to me to be nearer what I mean than anything I have ever done—nearer what I mean by fiction; the nearest thing before was ‹Kidnapped.› I am not forgetting the ‹Master of Ballantrae›; but that lacked all pleasurableness, and hence was imperfect in essence.» And in another place—«David himself I refuse to discuss; he *is*. . . . Tod Lapraik is a piece of living Scots; if I had never writ anything but that and Thrawn Janet, still I'd have been a writer.»

There you get at his art as he saw it. David and Wiltshire and Alan and Janet are vital. When they acted, it was from the primitive passions; the direct, simple emotions that are not dependent on culture and civilization for existence and for strength. Civilized men still retain them, but they are well covered up with conventionalities. That is why Stevenson loved vagabonds and savages: they showed him the basic passions at work. The old King of Apemama became his brother, and the rebel chiefs of Samoa were his devoted admirers. But he had no affection for them unless he found that among their barbaric emotions they cherished a certain ideal of conduct. The Road of the Loving Heart repaid him for all his worries about the Samoan rebels.

While the vitality of a character was its main fascination for Stevenson, in either real life or fiction, he followed Scott and Dumas in the belief that the best way to reveal character in a romance is by incident:—"It is not character but incident that wooes us out of our reserve. Something happens as we desire to have it happen to ourselves; some situation, that we have long dallied with in fancy, is realized in the story with enticing or appropriate details. Then we forget the characters; then we push the hero aside; then we plunge into the tale in our own person and bathe in fresh experience: and then, and then only, do we say we have been reading a romance." By this method, things which are not even pleasurable become interesting. "It is thus possible to construct a story, even of tragic import, in which every incident, detail, and trick of circumstances shall be welcome to the reader's thought."

How he labored to make every incident fit into his general scheme is shown in many of his letters. To a suggestion that he change a certain ending, he replied that every incident in the story had led up to that. An invalid for half his years, he looked on life and art with the eye of a man of action. The psychology of a character interested him, as it naturally would the descendant of the metaphysical Balfours. But no amount of analysis was sufficient in Stevenson's view to reveal a character to his readers. Action was the mirror in which it was reflected.

Measured by this, his own highest standard, there can be little question that Stevenson's highest achievement as a writer of romance remains where he placed it, with 'Kidnapped' and 'David Balfour' (called in England 'Catriona'). In these stories the grim, the terrible, and the eccentric, fall into their proper places in the development of the characters. Their reality, their appeal to what is universal and human, is never obscured by the barbaric. And near to them as a work of literary art is the finest product of his South Sea experiences, 'The Beach of Falesá'—a story which is so original in setting, character, and construction, so exquisite in its workmanship, that it may well be called a masterpiece. The magnificent fragment which he left in 'Weir of Hermiston' justifies many of his own predictions that it was to be his best work. His style certainly was never more a flexible instrument in his dexterous hand. There is nothing which he cannot do easily with it. Words and phrases strike you with a new beauty and force. Even when the artificial note of style is too persistent, his vision of the characters remains clear, vivid, and simple. Lord Braxfield had been in his imagination for many years—ever since he saw Raeburn's portrait of him and wrote about it. In Hermiston the long-conjured vision is materialized: and with him two fascinating women, the elder and the younger Kirstie; a last convincing proof that Stevenson could triumphantly create—what he had so long avoided in his stories—a thoroughly charming woman. 'Barbara Grant' had led the way to this success, and had given him confidence.

Like all expert craftsmen, he was fond of trying experiments in his art. He exhibited in them a less strenuous manifestation of his genius than in the great romances by which he wanted his achievement to be judged. ‹Treasure Island›—a boy's tale of adventure, and one of the most perfect in workmanship—had a grown-up successor in ‹The Wrecker,› which was avowed to be a tale of incident pure and simple; it was ‹Treasure Island› made real by his own experience of voyaging among the islands of the Pacific. ‹The Wrong Box› (devised with Mr. Osbourne) was his idea of a mystery tale, with the stage machinery of a farce often painfully present. His ingenious fancy at play showed its best traits in the fantastic tales of the ‹New Arabian Nights,› and ‹The Dynamiter› (in which Mrs. Stevenson took part). ‹Prince Otto› is a fantasy written under the inspiration of George Meredith; and it contains some of the most graceful and melodious prose that is to be found in Stevenson's writings. Whatever form of literary play his exuberant fancy led him into, it was always marked with originality of expression. Often it was artificial, but never labored or dull. His vivacity, his untiring interest in new things, led him occasionally into trivial and even disappointing experiments; but he carried them off with that gay air which never quite let the reader forget that he was a precocious boy doing his tricks.

The unfailing delight that he got out of his journey through the world is shown most vividly in his volumes of Essays and Travel, from which we have so freely quoted his own expressions of his likes and dislikes, his aspirations and his ideals. To these, readers will always turn for renewed acquaintance with Stevenson the man. His literary essays are cordial appreciations and interpretations by a fellow-craftsman, who knew the difficulties of doing the best work. His other essays are similar appreciations of characters in real life. His travels also resolve themselves into this. Wherever he went he was looking for men who touched some part of his vigorous ideal of manhood,—the chief factors in which were always «courage and intelligence.» It had many phases; but at the bottom there was a certain loyalty that was the supreme test for vagabond or nobleman. When he found that, much was forgiven. He believed in an «ultimate decency of things; aye, and if I woke in hell, I should still believe it!»

The lyrical expression of this attitude is the inspiration of his poems. To use his own figure of music, his ideal of a prose style was harmony; of a poetic style was melody. In his verse the strain is extremely simple, but it always sings. While he believed that the «grim and terrible» was the best subject for his prose, in his poetry he allowed beauty to lead him. All the gentler emotions that made him so loved by his friends found voice in his verse. Many of them were directly inspired by personal friendships. Loyalty to his country and his friends evokes the sweetest music:—

> «It's an owercome sooth for age an' youth,
> And it brooks wi' nae denial,
> That the dearest friends are the auldest friends,
> And the young are just on trial.»

While his deepest feelings are expressed in ‹Underwoods,› his tenderest are found in ‹A Child's Garden of Verses.› Its simplicity, and the delicate truth with which it images a child's fancies, have made it a classic of childhood. The conscious artist is never evident in it. It seems to be the spontaneous expression of a child's mind.

The place that Stevenson will take in literature is surely not to be made evident so long as the glamour of his personality remains over those who were his contemporaries. And with this personality so fully interwoven with his works, it seems hard to believe that the glamour can soon fade away. It is easy to imagine that, like Charles Lamb, he can never become wholly a «figure in literature,» but will remain vividly present to many generations of readers as a gifted child of genius who is to be fervently loved.

Robert Bridges,
(Droch.)

BED IN SUMMER

From ‹Poems and Ballads.› By permission of the authorized publishers, Charles Scribner's Sons

In winter I get up at night
And dress by yellow candle-light.
In summer, quite the other way,
I have to go to bed by day.

I have to go to bed and see
The birds still hopping on the tree,
Or hear the grown-up people's feet
Still going past me in the street.

And does it not seem hard to you,
When all the sky is clear and blue,
And I should like so much to play,
To have to go to bed by day?

TRAVEL

From 'Poems and Ballads.' By permission of the authorized publishers, Charles Scribner's Sons

I should like to rise and go
Where the golden apples grow; —
Where below another sky
Parrot islands anchored lie,
And, watched by cockatoos and goats,
Lonely Crusoes building boats; —
Where in sunshine reaching out,
Eastern cities, miles about,
Are with mosque and minaret
Among sandy gardens set,
And the rich goods from near and far
Hang for sale in the bazaar; —
Where the Great Wall round China goes,
And on one side the desert blows,
And with bell and voice and drum,
Cities on the other hum; —
Where are forest, hot as fire,
Wide as England, tall as a spire,
Full of apes and cocoanuts
And the negro hunters' huts; —
Where the knotty crocodile
Lies and blinks in the Nile,
And the red flamingo flies
Hunting fish before his eyes; —
Where in jungles, near and far,
Man-devouring tigers are,
Lying close and giving ear
Lest the hunt be drawing near,
Or a comer-by be seen
Swinging in a palanquin; —
Where among the desert sands
Some deserted city stands,
All its children, sweep and prince,
Grown to manhood ages since,
Not a foot in street or house,
Not a stir of child or mouse,
And when kindly falls the night,
In all the town no spark of light.
There I'll come when I'm a man,
With a camel caravan;

Light a fire in the gloom
Of some dusty dining-room;
See the pictures on the walls,
Heroes, fights, and festivals;
And in a corner find the toys
Of the old Egyptian boys.

THE LAND OF COUNTERPANE

From ‹Poems and Ballads.› By permission of the authorized publishers,
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When I was sick and lay a-bed,
I had two pillows at my head,
And all my toys beside me lay
To keep me happy all the day.

And sometimes for an hour or so
I watched my leaden soldiers go,
With different uniforms and drills,
Among the bedclothes, through the hills.

And sometimes sent my ships in fleets
All up and down among the sheets;
Or brought my trees and houses out,
And planted cities all about.

I was the giant great and still
That sits upon the pillow-hill,
And sees before him, dale and plain,
The pleasant Land of Counterpane.

NORTHWEST PASSAGE

From ‹Poems and Ballads.› By permission of the authorized publishers,
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I. GOOD-NIGHT

When the bright lamp is carried in,
The sunless hours again begin;
O'er all without, in field and lane,
The haunted night returns again.

Now we behold the embers flee
About the firelit hearth; and see

Our faces painted as we pass,
Like pictures, on the window-glass.

Must we to bed indeed? Well then,
Let us arise and go like men,
And face with an undaunted tread
The long black passage up to bed.

Farewell, O brother, sister, sire!
O pleasant party round the fire!
The songs you sing, the tales you tell,
Till far to-morrow, fare ye well!

II. SHADOW MARCH

All round the house is the jet-black night:
   It stares through the window-pane;
It crawls in the corners, hiding from the light,
   And it moves with the moving flame.

Now my little heart goes a-beating like a drum,
   With the breath of the Bogie in my hair;
And all round the candle the crooked shadows come,
   And go marching along up the stair.

The shadow of the balusters, the shadow of the lamp,
   The shadow of the child that goes to bed,—
All the wicked shadows coming, tramp, tramp, tramp,
   With the black night overhead.

III. IN PORT

Last, to the chamber where I lie
My fearful footsteps patter nigh,
And come from out the cold and gloom
Into my warm and cheerful room.

There, safe arrived, we turn about
To keep the coming shadows out,
And close the happy door at last
On all the perils that we past.

Then, when mamma goes by to bed,
She shall come in with tiptoe tread,
And see me lying warm and fast
And in the Land of Nod at last.

«IF THIS WERE FAITH»

From ‹Poems and Ballads.› By permission of the authorized publishers,
Charles Scribner's Sons

God, if this were enough,
That I see things bare to the buff
And up to the buttocks in mire;
That I ask nor hope nor hire,
Not in the husk,
Nor dawn beyond the dusk,
Nor life beyond death:
God, if this were faith?

Having felt thy wind in my face
Spit sorrow and disgrace,
Having seen thine evil doom
In Golgotha and Khartoum,
And the brutes, the work of thine hands,
Fill with injustice lands
And stain with blood the sea:
If still in my veins the glee
Of the black night and the sun
And the lost battle, run;
If, an adept,
The iniquitous lists I still accept
With joy, and joy to endure and be withstood,
And still to battle and perish for a dream of good:
God, if that were enough?

If to feel, in the ink of the slough
And the sink of the mire,
Veins of glory and fire
Run through and transpierce and transpire,
And a secret purpose of glory in every part,
And the answering glory of battle fill my heart;
To thrill with the joy of girded men
To go on for ever and fail and go on again,
And be mauled to the earth and arise,
And contend for the shade of a word and a thing not seen with the eyes:
With the half of a broken hope for a pillow at night
That somehow the right is the right
And the smooth shall bloom from the rough:
Lord, if that were enough?

REQUIEM

From ‹Poems and Ballads.› By permission of the authorized publishers, Charles Scribner's Sons

Under the wide and starry sky,
Dig the grave and let me lie.
Glad did I live and gladly die,
And I laid me down with a will.

This be the verse you grave for me:
Here he lies where he longed to be;
Home is the sailor, home from sea,
And the hunter home from the hill.

TO WILL. H. LOW

From ‹Poems and Ballads.› By permission of the authorized publishers, Charles Scribner's Sons

Youth now flees on feathered foot,
Faint and fainter sounds the flute,
Rarer songs of gods; and still
Somewhere on the sunny hill,
Or along the winding stream,
Through the willows, flits a dream;
Flits, but shows a smiling face,
Flees, but with so quaint a grace,
Nor can choose to stay at home,—
All must follow, all must roam.

This is unborn beauty: she
Now in air floats high and free,
Takes the sun and breaks the blue;—
Late with stooping pinion flew
Raking hedgerow trees, and wet
Her wing in silver streams, and set
Shining foot on temple roof:
Now again she flies aloof,
Coasting mountain clouds and kist
By the evening's amethyst.

In wet wood and miry lane,
Still we pant and pound in vain;
Still with leaden foot we chase
Waning pinion, fainting face;

Still with gray hair we stumble on,
Till, behold, the vision gone!
Where hath fleeting beauty led?
To the doorway of the dead.
Life is over, life was gay:
We have come the primrose way.

«THE TROPICS VANISH»

From ‹Poems and Ballads.› By permission of the authorized publishers,
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The tropics vanish, and meseems that I,
From Halkerside, from topmost Allermuir,
Or steep Caerketton, dreaming gaze again.
Far set in fields and woods, the town I see
Spring gallant from the shallows of her smoke,
Cragged, spired, and turreted, her virgin fort
Beflagged. About, on seaward-drooping hills,
New folds of city glitter. Last, the Forth
Wheels ample waters set with sacred isles,
And populous Fife smokes with a score of towns.

There, on the sunny frontage of a hill,
Hard by the house of kings, repose the dead,
My dead, the ready and the strong of word.
Their works, the salt-incrusted, still survive;
The sea bombards their founded towers; the night
Thrills pierced with their strong lamps. The artificers,
One after one, here in this grated cell,
Where the rain erases and the rust consumes,
Fell upon lasting silence. Continents
And continental oceans intervene;
A sea uncharted, on a lampless isle,
Environs and confines their wandering child
In vain. The voice of generations dead
Summons me, sitting distant, to arise,
My numerous footsteps nimbly to retrace,
And all mutation over, stretch me down
In that denoted city of the dead.

APEMAMA.

TROPIC RAIN

From ‹Poems and Ballads.› By permission of the authorized publishers, Charles Scribner's Sons

As the single pang of the blow, when the metal is mingled well,
Rings and lives and resounds in all the bounds of the bell:
So the thunder above spoke with a single tongue,
So in the heart of the mountain the sound of it rumbled and clung.

Sudden the thunder was drowned — quenched was the levin light —
And the angel spirit of rain laughed out loud in the night.
Loud as the maddened river raves in the cloven glen,
Angel of rain! you laughed and leaped on the roofs of men;
And the sleepers sprang in their beds, and joyed and feared as you fell.
You struck, and my cabin quailed; the roof of it roared like a bell.
You spoke, and at once the mountain shouted and shook with brooks.
You ceased, and the day returned, rosy, with virgin looks.
And methought that beauty and terror are only one, not two;
And the world has room for love, and death, and thunder, and dew;
And all the sinews of hell slumber in summer air;
And the face of God is a rock, but the face of the rock is fair.
Beneficent streams of tears flow at the finger of pain;
And out of the cloud that smites, beneficent rivers of rain.

Vailima.

CHRISTMAS AT SEA

From ‹Poems and Ballads.› By permission of the authorized publishers, Charles Scribner's Sons

The sheets were frozen hard, and they cut the naked hand;
The decks were like a slide, where a seaman scarce could stand;
The wind was a nor'wester, blowing squally off the sea;
And cliffs and spouting breakers were the only things a-lee.

They heard the surf a-roaring before the break of day;
But 'twas only with the peep of light we saw how ill we lay.
We tumbled every hand on deck instanter, with a shout,
And we gave her the maintops'l, and stood by to go about.

All day we tacked and tacked between the South Head and the North;
All day we hauled the frozen sheets, and got no further forth;

All day as cold as charity, in bitter pain and dread,
For very life and nature we tacked from head to head.

We gave the South a wider berth, for there the tide-race roared;
But every tack we made we brought the North Head close aboard:
So 's we saw the cliffs and houses, and the breakers running high,
And the coast-guard in his garden, with his glass against his eye.

The frost was on the village roofs as white as ocean foam;
The good red fires were burning bright in every 'longshore home;
The windows sparkled clear, and the chimneys volleyed out;
And I vow we sniffed the victuals as the vessel went about.

The bells upon the church were rung with a mighty jovial cheer;
For it's just that I should tell you how (of all days in the year)
This day of our adversity was blessèd Christmas morn,
And the house above the coast-guard's was the house where I was
born.

Oh! well I saw the pleasant room, the pleasant faces there,
My mother's silver spectacles, my father's silver hair;
And well I saw the firelight, like a flight of homely elves,
Go dancing round the china plates that stand upon the shelves.

And well I knew the talk they had, the talk that was of me,
Of the shadow on the household and the son that went to sea;
And oh the wicked fool I seemed, in every kind of way,
To be here and hauling frozen ropes on blessèd Christmas Day.

They lit the high sea-light, and the dark began to fall.
«All hands to loose topgallant sails,» I heard the captain call.
« By the Lord, she'll never stand it,» our first mate, Jackson, cried.—
« It's the one way or the other, Mr. Jackson,» he replied.

She staggered to her bearings, but the sails were new and good,
And the ship smelt up to windward just as though she understood.
As the winter's day was ending, in the entry of the night,
We cleared the weary headland, and passed below the light.

And they heaved a mighty breath, every soul on board but me,
As they saw her nose again pointing handsome out to sea;
But all that I could think of, in the darkness and the cold,
Was just that I was leaving home and my folks were growing old.

A FABLE

From ‹The Lantern-Bearers›

There is one fable that touches very near the quick of life: the fable of the monk who passed into the woods, heard a bird break into song, hearkened for a trill or two, and found himself on his return a stranger at his convent gates; for he had been absent fifty years, and of all his comrades there survived but one to recognize him. It is not only in the woods that this enchanter carols, though perhaps he is native there. . . . All life that is not merely mechanical is spun out of two strands: seeking for that bird and hearing him. And it is just this that makes life so hard to value, and the delight of each so incommunicable; and just a knowledge of this, and a remembrance of those fortunate hours in which the bird has sung to us, that fills us with such wonder when we turn the pages of the realist. There, to be sure, we find a picture of life in so far as it consists of mud and of old iron, cheap desires and cheap fears, that which we are ashamed to remember and that which we are careless whether we forget; but of the note of that time-devouring nightingale we hear no news.

STRIVING AND FAILING

From ‹A Christmas Sermon›

Life is not designed to minister to a man's vanity. He goes upon his long business most of the time with a hanging head, and all the time like a blind child. Full of rewards and pleasures as it is,— so that to see the day break, or the moon rise, or to meet a friend, or to hear the dinner call when he is hungry, fills him with surprising joys,— this world is yet for him no abiding city. Friendships fall through, health fails, weariness assails him; year after year he must thumb the hardly varying record of his own weakness and folly. It is a friendly process of detachment. When the time comes that he should go, there need be few illusions left about himself. «Here lies one who meant well, tried a little, failed much,» — surely that may be his epitaph, of which he need not be ashamed.

WE PASS THE FORTH

From ‹Kidnapped.› By permission of the authorized publishers, Charles Scribner's Sons

The month, as I have said, was not yet out, but it was already far through August, and beautiful warm weather, with every sign of an early and great harvest, when I was pronounced able for my journey. Our money was now run to so low an ebb that we must think first of all on speed; for if we came not soon to Mr. Rankeillor's, or if when we came there he should fail to help me, we must surely starve. In Alan's view, besides, the hunt must have now greatly slackened; and the line of the Forth, and even Stirling Bridge which is the main pass over that river, would be watched with little interest.

«It's a chief principle in military affairs,» said he, «to go where ye are least expected. Forth is our trouble; ye ken the saying, ‹Forth bridles the wild Hielandman.› Well, if we seek to creep round about the head of that river and come down by Kippen or Balfron, it's just precisely there that they'll be looking to lay hands on us. But if we stave on straight to the auld Brig' of Stirling, I'll lay my sword they let us pass unchallenged.»

The first night, accordingly, we pushed to the house of a Maclaren in Strathire, a friend of Duncan's, where we slept the twenty-first of the month, and whence we set forth again about the fall of night to make another easy stage. The twenty-second we lay in a heather-bush on a hillside in Uam Var, within view of a herd of deer,—the happiest ten hours of sleep in a fine, breathing sunshine, and on bone-dry ground, that I have ever tasted. That night we struck Allan Water, and followed it down; and coming to the edge of the hills saw the whole Carse of Stirling underfoot, as flat as a pancake, with the town and castle on a hill in the midst of it, and the moon shining on the Links of Forth.

«Now,» said Alan, «I kenna if ye care, but ye're in your own land again. We passed the Hieland Line in the first hour; and now if we could but pass yon crooked water, we might cast our bonnets in the air.»

In Allan Water, near by where it falls into the Forth, we found a little sandy islet, overgrown with burdock, butterbur, and the like low plants, that would just cover us if we lay flat. Here it was we made our camp, within plain view of Stirling Castle; whence we could hear the drums beat as some part of the garrison paraded. Shearers worked all day in a field on one side of the river; and we could hear the stones going on the hooks, and the voices and even the words of the men talking. It behoved to lie close and keep silent. But the sand of the little isle was sun-warm, the green plants gave us shelter for our heads, we had food and drink in plenty; and to crown all, we were within sight of safety.

As soon as the shearers quit their work and the dusk began to fall, we waded ashore and struck for the Bridge of Stirling, keeping to the fields and under the field fences.

The bridge is close under the castle hill; an old, high, narrow bridge with pinnacles along the parapet: and you may conceive with how much interest I looked upon it, not only as a place famous in history, but as the very doors of salvation to Alan and myself. The moon was not yet up when we came there; a few lights shone along the front of the fortress, and lower down a few lighted windows in the town; but it was all mighty still, and there seemed to be no guard upon the passage.

I was for pushing straight across; but Alan was more wary.

«It looks unco' quiet,» said he; «but for all that, we'll lie down here cannily behind a dike and make sure.»

So we lay for about a quarter of an hour, whiles whispering, whiles lying still and hearing nothing earthly but the washing of the water on the piers. At last there came by an old, hobbling woman with a crutch stick: who first stopped a little, close to where we lay, and bemoaned herself and the long way she had traveled; and then set forth again up the steep spring of the bridge. The woman was so little, and the night still so dark, that we soon lost sight of her; only heard the sound of her steps, and her stick, and a cough that she had by fits, draw slowly further away.

«She's bound to be across now,» I whispered.

«Na,» said Alan, «her foot still sounds boss* upon the bridge.»

And just then — «Who goes?» cried a voice, and we heard the butt of a musket rattle on the stones. I must suppose the sentry had been sleeping, so that had we tried we might have passed unseen; but he was awake now, and the chance forfeited.

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*Hollow: pronounced *bose*.

«This'll never do,» said Alan. «This'll never, never do for us, David.»

And without another word he began to crawl away through the fields; and a little after, being well out of eye-shot, got to his feet again, and struck along a road that led to the eastward. I could not conceive what he was doing; and indeed I was so sharply cut by the disappointment, that I was little likely to be pleased with anything. A moment back, and I had seen myself knocking at Mr. Rankeillor's door to claim my inheritance, like a hero in a ballad; and here was I back again, a wandering, hunted blackguard, on the wrong side of Forth.

«Well?» said I.

«Well,» said Alan, «what would ye have? They're none such fools as I took them for. We have still the Forth to pass, Davie — weary fall the rains that fed and the hillsides that guided it!»

«And why go east?» said I.

«Ou, just upon the chance!» said he. «If we cannae pass the river, we'll have to see what we can do for the firth.»

«There are fords upon the river, and none upon the firth,» said I.

«To be sure there are fords, and a bridge forbye,» quoth Alan; «and of what service, when they are watched?»

«Well,» said I, «but a river can be swum.»

«By them that have the skill of it,» returned he: «but I have yet to hear that either you or me is much of a hand at that exercise; and for my own part, I swim like a stone.»

«I'm not up to you in talking back, Alan,» I said; «but I can see we're making bad worse. If it's hard to pass a river, it stands to reason it must be worse to pass a sea.»

«But there's such a thing as a boat,» says Alan, «or I'm the more deceived.»

«Ay, and such a thing as money,» says I. «But for us that have neither one nor other, they might just as well not have been invented.»

«Ye think so?» said Alan.

«I do that,» said I.

«David,» says he, «ye're a man of small invention and less faith. But let me set my wits upon the hone, and if I cannae beg, borrow, nor yet steal a boat, I'll make one!»

«I think I see ye!» said I. «And what's more than all that: if ye pass a bridge, it can tell no tales; but if we pass the firth, there's the boat on the wrong side — somebody must have brought it — the countryside will all be in a bizz —»

« Man! » cried Alan, « if I make a boat, I'll make a body to take it back again! So deave me with no more of your nonsense, but walk (for that's what you've got to do) — and let Alan think for ye.»

All night, then, we walked through the north side of the Carse under the high line of the Ochil mountains; and by Alloa and Clackmannan and Culross, all of which we avoided: and about ten in the morning, mighty hungry and tired, came to the little clachan of Limekilns. This is a place that sits near in by the water-side, and looks across the Hope to the town of the Queensferry. Smoke went up from both of these, and from other villages and farms upon all hands. The fields were being reaped; two ships lay anchored, and boats were coming and going on the Hope. It was altogether a right pleasant sight to me; and I could not take my fill of gazing at these comfortable, green, cultivated hills, and the busy people both of the field and sea.

For all that, there was Mr. Rankeillor's house on the south shore, where I had no doubt wealth awaited me; and here was I upon the north, clad in poor enough attire of an outlandish fashion, with three silver shillings left to me of all my fortune, a price set upon my head, and an outlawed man for my sole company.

« O Alan! » said I, « to think of it! Over there, there's all that heart could want waiting me; and the birds go over, and the boats go over — all that please can go, but just me only! O man, but it's a heart-break! »

In Limekilns we entered a small change-house, which we only knew to be a public by the wand over the door, and bought some bread and cheese from a good-looking lass that was the servant. This we carried with us in a bundle, meaning to sit and eat it in a bush of wood on the sea-shore, that we saw some third part of a mile in front. As we went, I kept looking across the water and sighing to myself; and though I took no heed of it, Alan had fallen into a muse. At last he stopped in the way.

« Did ye take heed of the lass we bought this of? » says he, tapping on the bread and cheese.

« To be sure,» said I, « and a bonny lass she was.»

« Ye thought that? » cries he. « Man David, that's good news.»

«In the name of all that's wonderful, why so?» says I. «What good can that do?»

«Well,» said Alan, with one of his droll looks, «I was rather in hopes it would maybe get us that boat.»

«If it were the other way about, it would be liker it,» said I.

«That's all that you ken, ye see,» said Alan. «I don't want the lass to fall in love with ye, I want her to be sorry for ye, David; to which end, there is no manner of need that she should take you for a beauty. Let me see» (looking me curiously over). «I wish ye were a wee thing paler; but apart from that ye'll do fine for my purpose — ye have a fine, hang-dog, rag-and-tatter, clappermaclaw kind of a look to ye, as if ye had stolen the coat from a potato-bogle. Come: right about, and back to the change-house for that boat of ours.»

I followed him laughing.

«David Balfour,» said he, «ye're a very funny gentleman by your way of it, and this is a very funny employ for ye, no doubt. For all that, if ye have any affection for my neck (to say nothing of your own), ye will perhaps be kind enough to take this matter responsibly. I am going to do a bit of play-acting, the bottom ground of which is just exactly as serious as the gallows for the pair of us. So bear it, if ye please, in mind, and conduct yourself according.»

«Well, well,» said I, «have it as you will.»

As we got near the clachan, he made me take his arm and hang upon it like one almost helpless with weariness; and by the time he pushed open the change-house door, he seemed to be half carrying me. The maid appeared surprised (as well she might be) at our speedy return: but Alan had no words to spare for her in explanation, helped me to a chair, called for a tass of brandy with which he fed me in little sips, and then breaking up the bread and cheese helped me to eat it like a nursery-lass; the whole with that grave, concerned, affectionate countenance, that might have imposed upon a judge. It was small wonder if the maid were taken with the picture we presented, of a poor, sick, overwrought lad and his most tender comrade. She drew quite near, and stood leaning with her back on the next table.

«What's like wrong with him?» said she at last.

Alan turned upon her, to my great wonder, with a kind of fury. «Wrong?» cries he. «He's walked more hundreds of miles than he has hairs upon his chin, and slept oftener in wet heather than dry sheets. Wrong, quo' she! Wrong enough, I would think! Wrong, indeed!» and he kept grumbling to himself, as he fed me, like a man ill pleased.

« He's young for the like of that,» said the maid.

« Ower young,» said Alan, with his back to her.

« He would be better riding,» says she.

«And where could I get a horse for him?» cried Alan, turning on her with the same appearance of fury. « Would ye have me steal?»

I thought this roughness would have sent her off in dudgeon, as indeed it closed her mouth for the time. But my companion knew very well what he was doing; and for as simple as he was in some things of life, had a great fund of roguishness in such affairs as these.

« Ye neednae tell me,» she said at last—« ye're gentry.»

«Well,» said Alan, softened a little (I believe against his will) by this artless comment, «and suppose we were? did ever you hear that gentrice put money in folks' pockets?»

She sighed at this, as if she were herself some disinherited great lady. « No,» says she, « that's true indeed.»

I was all this while chafing at the part I played, and sitting tongue-tied between shame and merriment; but somehow at this I could hold in no longer, and bade Alan let me be, for I was better already. My voice stuck in my throat, for I ever hated to take part in lies; but my very embarrassment helped on the plot, for the lass no doubt set down my husky voice to sickness and fatigue.

« Has he nae friends?» said she in a tearful voice.

« That has he so,» cried Alan, « if we could but win to them, —friends and rich friends, beds to lie in, food to eat, doctors to see him,—and here he must tramp in the dubs and sleep in the heather like a beggarman.»

«And why that?» says the lass.

« My dear,» says Alan, « I cannae very safely say; but I'll tell ye what I'll do instead,» says he: « I'll whistle ye a bit tune.» And with that he leaned pretty far over the table, and in a mere breath of a whistle, but with a wonderful pretty sentiment, gave her a few bars of « Charlie is my darling.»

« Wheesht,» says she, and looked over her shoulder to the door.

« That's it,» said Alan.

«And him so young!» cried the lass.

«He's old enough to—» and Alan struck his forefinger on the back part of his neck, meaning that I was old enough to lose my head.

«It would be a black shame,» she cried, flushing high.

«It's what will be, though,» said Alan, «unless we manage the better.»

At this the lass turned and ran out of that part of the house, leaving us alone together; Alan in high good-humor at the furthering of his schemes, and I in bitter dudgeon at being called a Jacobite and treated like a child.

«Alan,» I cried, «I can stand no more of this.»

«Ye'll have to sit it then, Davie,» said he. «For if ye upset the pot now, ye may scrape your own life out of the fire, but Alan Breck is a dead man.»

This was so true that I could only groan; and even my groan served Alan's purpose, for it was overheard by the lass as she came flying in again with a dish of white puddings and a bottle of strong ale.

«Poor lamb!» says she; and had no sooner set the meat before us, than she touched me on the shoulder with a little friendly touch, as much as to bid me cheer up. Then she told us to fall to, and there would be no more to pay; for the inn was her own, or at least her father's, and he was gone for the day to Pittencrieff. We waited for no second bidding, for bread and cheese is but cold comfort, and the puddings smelt excellently well; and while we sat and ate, she took up that same place by the next table, looking on, and thinking, and frowning to herself, and drawing the string of her apron through her hand.

«I'm thinking ye have rather a long tongue,» she said at last to Alan.

«Ay,» said Alan; «but ye see I ken the folk I speak to.»

«I would never betray ye,» said she, «if ye mean that.»

«No,» said he, «ye're not that kind. But I'll tell ye what ye would do,—ye would help.»

«I couldnae,» said she, shaking her head. «Na, I couldnae.»

«No,» said he, «but if ye could?»

She answered him nothing.

«Look here, my lass,» said Alan: «there are boats in the kingdom of Fife, for I saw two (no less) upon the beach, as I came in by your town's end. Now if we could have the use of a boat to pass under cloud of night into Lothian, and some secret, decent kind of a man to bring that boat back again and keep his counsel, there would be two souls saved: mine to all likelihood — his to a dead surety. If we lack that boat, we have but three shillings left in this wide world; and where to go, and how to do, and what other place there is for us except the chains of a gibbet — I give you my naked word, I kenna! Shall we go wanting, lassie? Are ye to lie in your warm bed and think upon us, when the wind gowls in the chimney and the rain tirls on the roof? Are ye to eat your meat by the cheeks of a red fire, and think upon this poor sick lad of mine, biting his finger-ends on a blae muir for cauld and hunger? Sick or sound, he must aye be moving; with the death-grapple at his throat, he must aye be trailing in the rain on the long roads; and when he gants his last on a rickle of cauld stanes, there will be nae friends near him but only me and God."

At this appeal, I could see the lass was in great trouble of mind; being tempted to help us, and yet in some fear she might be helping malefactors: and so now I determined to step in myself, and to allay her scruples with a portion of the truth.

"Did you ever hear," said I, "of Mr. Rankeillor of the Queensferry?"

"Rankeillor the writer?" said she. "I daursay that!"

"Well," said I, "it's to his door that I am bound, so you may judge by that if I am an ill-doer; and I will tell you more: that though I am indeed, by a dreadful error, in some peril of my life, King George has no truer friend in all Scotland than myself."

Her face cleared up mightily at this, although Alan's darkened.

"That's more than I would ask," said she. "Mr. Rankeillor is a kennt man." And she bade us finish our meat, get clear of the clachan as soon as might be, and lie close in the bit wood on the sea-beach. "And ye can trust me," says she, "I'll find some means to put you over."

At this we waited for no more, but shook hands with her upon the bargain, made short work of the puddings, and set forth again from Limekilns as far as to the wood. It was a small piece of perhaps a score of elders and hawthorns, and a few young ashes, not thick enough to veil us from passers-by upon the road or beach. Here we must lie, however, making the best of the brave warm weather and the good hopes we now had of a deliverance, and planning more particularly what remained for us to do.

We had but one trouble all day: when a strolling piper came and sat in the same wood with us; a red-nosed, blear-eyed, drunken dog, with a great bottle of whisky in his pocket, and a long story of wrongs that had been done him by all sorts of persons, from the lord president of the court of session who had denied him justice, down to the baillies of Inverkeithing who had given him more of it than he desired. It was impossible but he should conceive some suspicion of two men lying all day concealed in a thicket and having no business to allege. As long as he stayed there, he kept us in hot water with prying questions; and after he was gone, as he was a man not very likely to hold his tongue, we were in the greater impatience to be gone ourselves.

The day came to an end with the same brightness; the night fell quiet and clear; lights came out in houses and hamlets, and then, one after another, began to be put out: but it was past eleven, and we were long since strangely tortured with anxieties, before we heard the grinding of oars upon the rowing-pins. At that, we looked out and saw the lass herself coming rowing to us in a boat. She had trusted no one with our affairs — not even her sweetheart, if she had one; but as soon as her father was asleep, had left the house by a window, stolen a neighbor's boat, and come to our assistance single-handed.

I was abashed how to find expression for my thanks: but she was no less abashed at the thought of hearing them; begged us to lose no time and to hold our peace, saying (very properly) that the heart of our matter was in haste and silence: and so, what with one thing and another, she had set us on the Lothian shore not far from Carriden, had shaken hands with us, and was out again at sea and rowing for Limekilns, before there was one word said either of her service or our gratitude.

Even after she was gone we had nothing to say, as indeed nothing was enough for such a kindness. Only Alan stood a great while upon the shore shaking his head.

«It is a very fine lass,» he said at last. «David, it is a very fine lass.» And a matter of an hour later, as we were lying in a den on the sea-shore and I had been already dozing, he broke out again in commendations of her character. For my part I could say nothing; she was so simple a creature that my heart smote me both with remorse and fear: remorse, because we had traded upon her ignorance; and fear, lest we should have anyway involved her in the dangers of our situation.

A NIGHT AMONG THE PINES

From ‹Travels with a Donkey.› By permission of the authorized publishers, Charles Scribner's Sons

From Bleymard after dinner, although it was already late, I set out to scale a portion of the Lozère. An ill-marked stony drove road guided me forward; and I met nearly half a dozen bullock carts descending from the woods, each laden with a whole pine-tree for the winter's firing. At the top of the woods, which do not climb very high upon this cold ridge, I struck leftward by a path among the pines, until I hit on a dell of green turf, where a streamlet made a little spout over some stones to serve me for a water-tap. «In a more sacred or sequestered bower . . . nor nymph, nor faunus, haunted.» The trees were not old, but they grew thickly round the glade: there was no outlook, except northeastward upon distant hill-tops, or straight upward to the sky; and the encampment felt secure and private like a room. By the time I had made my arrangements and fed Modestine, the day was already beginning to decline. I buckled myself to the knees into my sack and made a hearty meal; and as soon as the sun went down, I pulled my cap over my eyes and fell asleep.

Night is a dead monotonous period under a roof; but in the open world it passes lightly, with its stars and dews and perfumes, and the hours are marked by changes in the face of Nature. What seems a kind of temporal death to people choked between walls and curtains, is only a light and living slumber to the man who sleeps a-field. All night long he can hear Nature breathing deeply and freely: even as she takes her rest, she turns and smiles; and there is one stirring hour unknown to those who dwell in houses, when a wakeful influence goes abroad over the sleeping hemisphere, and all the outdoor world are on their feet. It is then that the cock first crows,—not this time to announce the dawn, but like a cheerful watchman speeding the course of night. Cattle awake on the meadows; sheep break their fast on dewy hillsides, and change to a new lair among the ferns; and houseless men who have lain down with the fowls, open their dim eyes and behold the beauty of the night.

At what inaudible summons, at what gentle touch of Nature, are all these sleepers thus recalled in the same hour to life? Do the stars rain down an influence, or do we share some thrill of mother earth below our resting bodies? Even shepherds and old country-folk, who are the deepest read in these arcana, have not a guess as to the means or purpose of this nightly resurrection. Towards two in the morning they declare the thing takes place; and neither know nor inquire further. And at least it is a pleasant incident. We are disturbed in our slumber only, like the luxurious Montaigne, "that we may the better and more sensibly relish it." We have a moment to look upon the stars. And there is a special pleasure for some minds in the reflection that we share the impulse with all outdoor creatures in our neighborhood; that we have escaped out of the Bastille of civilization, and are become, for the time being, a mere kindly animal and a sheep of Nature's flock.

When that hour came to me among the pines, I awakened thirsty. My tin was standing by me half full of water. I emptied it at a draught; and feeling broad awake after this internal cold aspersion, sat upright to make a cigarette. The stars were clear, colored, and jewel-like, but not frosty. A faint silvery vapor stood for the Milky Way. All around me the black fir-points stood upright and stock-still. By the whiteness of the pack-saddle, I could see Modestine walking round and round at the length of her tether; I could hear her steadily munching at the sward: but there was not another sound, save the indescribable quiet talk of the runnel over the stones. I lay lazily smoking and studying the color of the sky, as we call the void of space, from where it showed a reddish gray behind the pines to where it showed a glossy blue-black between the stars. As if to be more like a peddler, I wear a silver ring. This I could see faintly shining as I raised or lowered the cigarette; and at each whiff the inside of my hand was illuminated, and became for a second the highest light in the landscape.

A faint wind, more like a moving coolness than a stream of air, passed down the glade from time to time; so that even in my great chamber the air was being renewed all night long. I thought with horror of the inn at Chasseradès and the congregated nightcaps; with horror of the nocturnal prowesses of clerks and students, of hot theatres and pass-keys and close rooms. I have not often enjoyed a more serene possession of myself, nor felt more independent of material aids. The outer world, from which we cower into our houses, seemed after all a gentle habitable place; and night after night a man's bed, it seemed, was laid and waiting for him in the fields, where God keeps an open house. I thought I had rediscovered one of those truths which are revealed to savages and hid from political economists; at the least, I had discovered a new pleasure for myself. And yet even while I was exulting in my solitude I became aware of a strange lack. I wished a companion to lie near me in the starlight, silent and not moving, but ever within touch. For there is a fellowship more quiet even than solitude, and which, rightly understood, is solitude made perfect. And to live out of doors with the woman a man loves is of all lives the most complete and free.

As I thus lay, between content and longing, a faint noise stole towards me through the pines. I thought, at first, it was the crowing of cocks or the barking of dogs at some very distant farm; but steadily and gradually it took articulate shape in my ears, until I became aware that a passenger was going by upon the high-road in the valley, and singing loudly as he went. There was more of good-will than grace in his performance: but he trolled with ample lungs; and the sound of his voice took hold upon the hillside and set the air shaking in the leafy glens. I have heard people passing by night in sleeping cities: some of them sang; one, I remember, played loudly on the bagpipes. I have heard the rattle of a cart or carriage spring up suddenly after hours of stillness, and pass, for some minutes, within the range of my hearing as I lay abed. There is a romance about all who are abroad in the black hours, and with something of a thrill we try to guess their business. But here the romance was double: first, this glad passenger, lit internally with wine, who sent up his voice in music through the night; and then I, on the other hand, buckled into my sack, and smoking alone in the pine-woods between four and five thousand feet towards the stars.

When I awoke again (Sunday, 29th September), many of the stars had disappeared; only the stronger companions of the night still burned visibly overhead: and away towards the east I saw a faint haze of light upon the horizon, such as had been the Milky Way when I was last awake. Day was at hand. I lit my lantern, and by its glow-worm light put on my boots and gaiters; then I broke up some bread for Modestine, filled my can at the water-tap, and lit my spirit-lamp to boil myself some chocolate. The blue darkness lay long in the glade where I had so sweetly slumbered; but soon there was a broad streak of orange melting into gold along the mountain-tops of Vivarais. A solemn glee possessed my mind at this gradual and lovely coming in of day. I heard the runnel with delight; I looked round me for something beautiful and unexpected: but the still black pine-trees, the hollow glade, the munching ass, remained unchanged in figure. Nothing had altered but the light; and that indeed shed over all a spirit of life and of breathing peace, and moved me to a strange exhilaration.

I drank my water chocolate, which was hot if it was not rich, and strolled here and there, and up and down about the glade. While I was thus delaying, a gush of steady wind, as long as a heavy sigh, poured direct out of the quarter of the morning. It was cold, and set me sneezing. The trees near at hand tossed their black plumes in its passage; and I could see the thin distant spires of pine along the edge of the hill rock slightly to and fro against the golden east. Ten minutes after, the sunlight spread at a gallop along the hillside, scattering shadows and sparkles, and the day had come completely.

I hastened to prepare my pack, and tackle a steep ascent that lay before me; but I had something on my mind. It was only a fancy; yet a fancy will sometimes be importunate. I had been most hospitably received and punctually served in my green caravanserai. The room was airy, the water excellent, and the dawn had called me to a moment. I say nothing of the tapestries or the inimitable ceiling, nor yet of the view which I commanded from the windows; but I felt I was in some one's debt for all this liberal entertainment. And so it pleased me, in a half-laughing way, to leave pieces of money on the turf as I went along, until I had left enough for my night's lodging. I trust they did not fall to some rich and churlish drover.

A LODGING FOR THE NIGHT

From ‹New Arabian Nights.› By permission of the authorized publishers, Charles Scribner's Sons

It was late in November 1456. And snow fell over Paris with rigorous, relentless persistence; sometimes the wind made a sally and scattered it in flying vortices; sometimes there was a lull, and flake after flake descended out of the black night air, silent, circuitous, interminable. To poor people, looking up under moist eyebrows, it seemed a wonder where it all came from. Master Francis Villon had propounded an alternative that afternoon, at a tavern window: was it only pagan Jupiter plucking geese upon Olympus? or were the holy angels moulting? He was only a poor Master of Arts, he went on; and as the question somewhat touched upon divinity, he durst not venture to conclude. A silly old priest from Montargis, who was among the company, treated the young rascal to a bottle of wine in honor of the jest and grimaces with which it was accompanied, and swore on his own white beard that he had been just such another irreverent dog when he was Villon's age.

The air was raw and pointed, but not far below freezing; and the flakes were large, damp, and adhesive. The whole city was sheeted up. An army might have marched from end to end and not a footfall given the alarm. If there were any belated birds in heaven, they saw the island like a large white patch, and the bridges like slim white spars, on the black ground of the river. High up overhead the snow settled among the tracery of the cathedral towers. Many a niche was drifted full; many a statue wore a long white bonnet on its grotesque or sainted head. The gargoyles had been transformed into great false noses, drooping towards the point. The crockets were like upright pillows swollen on one side. In the intervals of the wind, there was a dull sound of dripping about the precincts of the church.

The cemetery of St. John had taken its own share of the snow. All the graves were decently covered; tall white housetops stood around in grave array; worthy burghers were long ago in bed, be-nightcapped like their domiciles; there was no light in all the neighborhood but a little peep from a lamp that hung swinging in the church choir, and tossed the shadows to and fro in time to its oscillations. The clock was hard on ten when the patrol went by with halberds and a lantern, beating their hands; and they saw nothing suspicious about the cemetery of St. John.

Yet there was a small house, backed up against the cemetery wall, which was still awake, and awake to evil purpose, in that snoring district. There was not much to betray it from without: only a stream of warm vapor from the chimney-top, a patch where the snow melted on the roof, and a few half-obliterated footprints at the door. But within, behind the shuttered windows, Master Francis Villon the poet, and some of the thievish crew with whom he consorted, were keeping the night alive and passing round the bottle.

A great pile of living embers diffused a strong and ruddy glow from the arched chimney. Before this straddled Dom Nicolas, the Picardy monk, with his skirts picked up and his fat legs bared to the comfortable warmth. His dilated shadow cut the room in half; and the firelight only escaped on either side of his broad person, and in a little pool between his outspread feet. His face had the beery, bruised appearance of a continual drinker's: it was covered with a network of congested veins, purple in ordinary circumstances, but now pale violet; for even with his back to the fire the cold pinched him on the other side. His cowl had half fallen back, and made a strange excrescence on either side of his bull neck. So he straddled, grumbling, and cut the room in half with the shadow of his portly frame.

On the right, Villon and Guy Tabary were huddled together over a scrap of parchment; Villon making a ballade which he was to call the 'Ballade of Roast Fish,' and Tabary spluttering admiration at his shoulder. The poet was a rag of a man, dark, little, and lean, with hollow cheeks and thin black locks. He carried his four-and-twenty years with feverish animation. Greed had made folds about his eyes, evil smiles had puckered his mouth. The wolf and pig struggled together in his face. It was an eloquent, sharp, ugly, earthly countenance. His hands were small and prehensile, with fingers knotted like a cord; and they were continually flickering in front of him in violent and expressive pantomine. As for Tabary, a broad, complacent, admiring imbecility breathed from his squash nose and slobbering lips: he had become a thief, just as he might have become the most decent of burgesses, by the imperious chance that rules the lives of human geese and human donkeys.

At the monk's other hand, Montigny and Thevenin Pensete played a game of chance. About the first there clung some flavor of good birth and training, as about a fallen angel: something long, lithe, and courtly in the person; something aquiline and darkling in the face. Thevenin, poor soul, was in great feather: he had done a good stroke of knavery that afternoon in the Faubourg St. Jacques, and all night he had been gaining from Montigny. A flat smile illuminated his face; his bald head shone rosily in a garland of red curls; his little protuberant stomach shook with silent chucklings as he swept in his gains.

« Doubles or quits? » said Thevenin.

Montigny nodded grimly.

«*Some may prefer to dine in state,*» wrote Villon, «*On bread and cheese on silver plate. Or, or* — help me out, Guido!»

Tabary giggled.

« *Or parsley on a golden dish,* » scribbled the poet.

The wind was freshening without; it drove the snow before it, and sometimes raised its voice in a victorious whoop, and made sepulchral grumblings in the chimney. The cold was growing sharper as the night went on. Villon, protruding his lips, imitated the gust with something between a whistle and a groan. It was an eerie, uncomfortable talent of the poet's, much detested by the Picardy monk.

« Can't you hear it rattle in the gibbet? » said Villon. « They are all dancing the Devil's jig on nothing, up there. You may dance, my gallants, you'll be none the warmer! Whew! what a gust! Down went somebody just now! A medlar the fewer on the three-legged medlar-tree! — I say, Dom Nicolas, it'll be cold to-night on the St. Denis Road? » he asked.

Dom Nicolas winked both his big eyes, and seemed to choke upon his Adam's apple. Montfaucon, the great grisly Paris gibbet, stood hard by the St. Denis Road, and the pleasantry touched him on the raw. As for Tabary, he laughed immoderately over the medlars; he had never heard anything more light-hearted, and he held his sides and crowed. Villon fetched him a fillip on the nose, which turned his mirth into an attack of coughing.

« Oh, stop that row, » said Villon, « and think of rhymes to 'fish.' »

« Doubles or quits, » said Montigny doggedly.

« With all my heart,» quoth Thevenin.

« Is there any more in that bottle ?» asked the monk.

« Open another,» said Villon. « How do you ever hope to fill that big hogshead, your body, with little things like bottles? And how do you expect to get to heaven? How many angels, do you fancy, can be spared to carry up a single monk from Picardy? Or do you think yourself another Elias — and they'll send the coach for you?»

«*Hominibus impossibile*,» replied the monk as he filled his glass.

Tabary was in ecstasies.

Villon filliped his nose again.

« Laugh at my jokes if you like,» he said.

« It was very good,» objected Tabary.

Villon made a face at him. « Think of rhymes to 'fish,'» he said. « What have you to do with Latin? You'll wish you knew none of it at the great assizes, when the Devil calls for Guido Tabary, clericus — the Devil with the hump-back and red-hot finger-nails. Talking of the Devil,» he added in a whisper, « look at Montigny!»

All three peered covertly at the gamester. He did not seem to be enjoying his luck. His mouth was a little to a side; one nostril nearly shut, and the other much inflated. The black dog was on his back, as people say in terrifying nursery metaphor; and he breathed hard under the grewsome burden.

« He looks as if he could knife him,» whispered Tabary, with round eyes.

The monk shuddered, and turned his face and spread his open hands to the red embers. It was the cold that thus affected Dom Nicolas, and not any excess of moral sensibility.

« Come now,» said Villon — « about this ballade. How does it run so far?» And beating time with his hand, he read it aloud to Tabary.

They were interrupted at the fourth rhyme by a brief and fatal movement among the gamesters. The round was completed, and Thevenin was just opening his mouth to claim another victory, when Montigny leaped up, swift as an adder, and stabbed him to the heart. The blow took effect before he had time to utter a cry, before he had time to move. A tremor or two convulsed his frame; his hands opened and shut, his heels rattled on the floor; then his head rolled backward over one shoulder with the eyes wide open, and Thevenin Pensete's spirit had returned to Him who made it.

Every one sprang to his feet; but the business was over in two twos. The four living fellows looked at each other in rather a ghastly fashion; the dead man contemplating a corner of the roof with a singular and ugly leer.

« My God! » said Tabary; and he began to pray in Latin.

Villon broke out into hysterical laughter. He came a step forward and ducked a ridiculous bow at Thevenin, and laughed still louder. Then he sat down suddenly, all of a heap, upon a stool, and continued laughing bitterly as though he would shake himself to pieces.

Montigny recovered his composure first.

« Let's see what he has about him, » he remarked; and he picked the dead man's pockets with a practiced hand, and divided the money into four equal portions on the table. « There's for you, » he said.

The monk received his share with a deep sigh, and a single stealthy glance at the dead Thevenin, who was beginning to sink into himself and topple sideways off the chair.

« We're all in for it, » cried Villon, swallowing his mirth. « It's a hanging job for every man jack of us that's here — not to speak of those who aren't. » He made a shocking gesture in the air with his raised right hand, and put out his tongue and threw his head on one side, so as to counterfeit the appearance of one who has been hanged. Then he pocketed his share of the spoil, and executed a shuffle with his feet as if to restore the circulation.

Tabary was the last to help himself; he made a dash at the money and retired to the other end of the apartment.

Montigny stuck Thevenin upright in the chair, and drew out the dagger, which was followed by a jet of blood.

« You fellows had better be moving, » he said, as he wiped the blade on his victim's doublet.

« I think we had, » returned Villon with a gulp. « Damn his fat head! » he broke out. « It sticks in my throat like phlegm. What right has a man to have red hair when he is dead? » And he fell all of a heap again upon the stool, and fairly covered his face with his hands.

Montigny and Dom Nicolas laughed aloud, even Tabary feebly chiming in.

«Cry-baby,» said the monk.

«I always said he was a woman,» added Montigny with a sneer. «Sit up, can't you?» he went on, giving another shake to the murdered body. «Tread out that fire, Nick!»

But Nick was better employed: he was quietly taking Villon's purse, as the poet sat, limp and trembling, on the stool where he had been making a ballade not three minutes before. Montigny and Tabary dumbly demanded a share of the booty, which the monk silently promised as he passed the little bag into the bosom of his gown. In many ways an artistic nature unfits a man for practical existence.

No sooner had the theft been accomplished than Villon shook himself, jumped to his feet, and began helping to scatter and extinguish the embers. Meanwhile Montigny opened the door and cautiously peered into the street. The coast was clear; there was no meddlesome patrol in sight. Still it was judged wiser to slip out severally; and as Villon was himself in a hurry to escape from the neighborhood of the dead Thevenin, and the rest were in a still greater hurry to get rid of him before he should discover the loss of his money, he was the first by general consent to issue forth into the street.

The wind had triumphed and swept all the clouds from heaven. Only a few vapors, as thin as moonlight, fleeted rapidly across the stars. It was bitter cold; and by a common optical effect, things seemed almost more definite than in the broadest daylight. The sleeping city was absolutely still; a company of white hoods, a field full of little alps, below the twinkling stars. Villon cursed his fortune. Would it were still snowing! Now, wherever he went, he left an indelible trail behind him on the glittering streets; wherever he went, he was still tethered to the house by the cemetery of St. John; wherever he went, he must weave, with his own plodding feet, the rope that bound him to the crime and would bind him to the gallows. The leer of the dead man came back to him with a new significance. He snapped his fingers as if to pluck up his own spirits; and choosing a street at random, stepped boldly forward in the snow.

Two things preoccupied him as he went: the aspect of the gallows at Montfaucon in this bright, windy phase of the night's existence, for one; and for another, the look of the dead man with his bald head and garland of red curls. Both struck cold upon his heart; and he kept quickening his pace as if he could escape from unpleasant thoughts by mere fleetness of foot. Sometimes he looked back over his shoulder with a sudden nervous jerk; but he was the only moving thing in the white streets, except when the wind swooped round a corner and threw up the snow, which was beginning to freeze, in spots of glittering dust.

Suddenly he saw, a long way before him, a black clump and a couple of lanterns. The clump was in motion, and the lanterns swung as though carried by men walking. It was a patrol. And though it was merely crossing his line of march, he judged it wiser to get out of eyeshot as speedily as he could. He was not in the humor to be challenged, and he was conscious of making a very conspicuous mark upon the snow. Just on his left hand there stood a great hotel, with some turrets and a large porch before the door: it was half ruinous, he remembered, and had long stood empty; and so he made three steps of it, and jumped into the shelter of the porch. It was pretty dark inside, after the glimmer of the snowy streets; and he was groping forward with outspread hands, when he stumbled over some substance which offered an indescribable mixture of resistances, hard and soft, firm and loose. His heart gave a leap, and he sprang two steps back and stared dreadfully at the obstacle. Then he gave a little laugh of relief. It was only a woman, and she dead. He knelt beside her to make sure upon this latter point. She was freezing cold, and rigid like a stick. A little ragged finery fluttered in the wind about her hair, and her cheeks had been heavily rouged that same afternoon. Her pockets were quite empty; but in her stocking, underneath the garter, Villon found two of the small coins that went by the name of whites. It was little enough, but it was always something; and the poet was moved with a deep sense of pathos that she should have died before she had spent her money. That seemed to him a dark and pitiable mystery; and he looked from the coins in his hand to the dead woman, and back again to the coins, shaking his head over the riddle of man's life. Henry V. of England, dying at Vincennes just after he had conquered France, and this poor jade cut off by a cold draught in a great man's doorway before she had time to spend her couple of whites,—it seemed a cruel way to carry on the world. Two whites would have taken such a little while to squander; and yet it would have been one more good taste in the mouth, one more smack of the lips, before the Devil got the soul and the body was left to birds and vermin. He would like to use all his tallow before the light was blown out and the lantern broken.

While these thoughts were passing through his mind, he was feeling, half mechanically, for his purse. Suddenly his heart stopped beating; a feeling of cold scales passed up the back of his legs, and a cold blow seemed to fall upon his scalp. He stood petrified for a moment; then he felt again with one feverish movement; and then his loss burst upon him, and he was covered at once with perspiration. To spendthrifts money is so living and actual — it is such a thin veil between them and their pleasures! There is only one limit to their fortune,— that of time; and a spendthrift with only a few crowns is the Emperor of Rome until they are spent. For such a person to lose his money is to suffer the most shocking reverse, and fall from heaven to hell, from all to nothing, in a breath. And all the more if he has put his head in the halter for it; if he may be hanged to-morrow for that same purse so dearly earned, so foolishly departed! Villon stood and cursed; he threw the two whites into the street; he shook his fist at heaven; he stamped, and was not horrified to find himself trampling the poor corpse. Then he began rapidly to retrace his steps towards the house beside the cemetery. He had forgotten all fear of the patrol, which was long gone by at any rate, and had no idea but that of his lost purse. It was in vain that he looked right and left upon the snow: nothing was to be seen. He had not dropped it in the streets. Had it fallen in the house? He would have liked dearly to go in and see; but the idea of the grisly occupant unmanned him. And he saw besides, as he drew near, that their efforts to put out the fire had been unsuccessful; on the contrary, it had broken into a blaze, and a changeful light played in the chinks of door and window, and revived his terror for the authorities and Paris gibbet.

He returned to the hotel with the porch, and groped about upon the snow for the money he had thrown away in his childish passion. But he could only find one white: the other had probably struck sideways and sunk deeply in. With a single white in his pocket, all his projects for a rousing night in some wild tavern vanished utterly away. And it was not only pleasure that fled laughing from his grasp: positive discomfort, positive pain, attacked him as he stood ruefully before the porch. His perspiration had dried upon him; and although the wind had now fallen, a binding frost was setting in stronger with every hour, and he felt benumbed and sick at heart. What was to be done? Late as was the hour, improbable as was success, he would try the house of his adopted father, the chaplain of St. Benoît.

He ran there all the way, and knocked timidly. There was no answer. He knocked again and again, taking heart with every stroke; and at last steps were heard approaching from within. A barred wicket fell open in the iron-studded door, and emitted a gush of yellow light.

« Hold up your face to the wicket,» said the chaplain from within.

« It's only me,» whimpered Villon.

« Oh, it's only you, is it?» returned the chaplain; and he cursed him with foul unpriestly oaths for disturbing him at such an hour, and bade him be off to hell, where he came from.

« My hands are blue to the wrist,» pleaded Villon; « my feet are dead and full of twinges; my nose aches with the sharp air; the cold lies at my heart. I may be dead before morning. Only this once, father, and before God, I will never ask again!»

« You should have come earlier,» said the ecclesiastic coolly. « Young men require a lesson now and then.» He shut the wicket and retired deliberately into the interior of the house.

Villon was beside himself; he beat upon the door with his hands and feet, and shouted hoarsely after the chaplain.

« Wormy old fox!» he cried. « If I had my hand under your twist, I would send you flying headlong into the bottomless pit.»

A door shut in the interior, faintly audible to the poet down long passages. He passed his hand over his mouth with an oath. And then the humor of the situation struck him, and he laughed and looked lightly up to heaven, where the stars seemed to be winking over his discomfiture.

What was to be done? It looked very like a night in the frosty streets. The idea of the dead woman popped into his imagination, and gave him a hearty fright: what had happened to her in the early night might very well happen to him before morning. And he so young! and with such immense possibilities of disorderly amusement before him! He felt quite pathetic over the notion of his own fate, as if it had been some one else's, and made a little imaginative vignette of the scene in the morning when they should find his body.

He passed all his chances under review, turning the white between his thumb and forefinger. Unfortunately he was on bad terms with some old friends, who would once have taken pity on him in such a plight. He had lampooned them in verses; he had beaten and cheated them: and yet now, when he was in so close a pinch, he thought there was at least one who might perhaps relent. It was a chance. It was worth trying at least, and he would go and see.

On the way, two little accidents happened to him which colored his musings in a very different manner. For, first, he fell in with the track of a patrol, and walked in it for some hundred yards, although it lay out of his direction. And this spirited him up: at least he had confused his trail; for he was still possessed with the idea of people tracking him all about Paris over the snow, and collaring him next morning before he was awake. The other matter affected him quite differently. He passed a street corner where, not so long before, a woman and her child had been devoured by wolves. This was just the kind of weather, he reflected, when wolves might take it into their heads to enter Paris again; and a lone man in these deserted streets would run the chance of something worse than a mere scare. He stopped and looked upon the place with an unpleasant interest. It was a centre where several lanes intersected each other; and he looked down them all, one after another, and held his breath to listen, lest he should detect some galloping black things on the snow or hear the sound of howling between him and the river. He remembered his mother telling him the story and pointing out the spot, while he was yet a child. His mother! If he only knew where she lived, he might make sure at least of shelter. He determined he would inquire upon the morrow; nay, he would go and see her too, poor old girl! So thinking, he arrived at his destination — his last hope for the night.

The house was quite dark, like its neighbors; and yet after a few taps he heard a movement overhead, a door opening, and a cautious voice asking who was there. The poet named himself in a loud whisper, and waited, not without some trepidation, the result. Nor had he to wait long. A window was suddenly opened, and a pailful of slops splashed down upon the doorstep.

Villon had not been unprepared for something of the sort, and had put himself as much in shelter as the nature of the porch admitted; but for all that, he was deplorably drenched below the waist. His hose began to freeze almost at once. Death from cold and exposure stared him in the face; he remembered he was of phthisical tendency, and began coughing tentatively. But the gravity of the danger steadied his nerves. He stopped a few hundred yards from the door where he had been so rudely used, and reflected with his finger to his nose. He could only see one way of getting a lodging, and that was to take it. He had noticed a house not far away, which looked as if it might be easily broken into; and thither he betook himself promptly, entertaining himself on the way with the idea of a room still hot, with a table still loaded with the remains of supper, where he might pass the rest of the black hours, and whence he should issue on the morrow with an armful of valuable plate. He even considered on what viands and what wines he should prefer; and as he was calling the roll of his favorite dainties, roast fish presented itself to his mind with an odd mixture of amusement and horror.

« I shall never finish that ballade, » he thought to himself; and then, with another shudder at the recollection, « Oh, damn his fat head! » he repeated fervently, and spat upon the snow.

The house in question looked dark at first sight; but as Villon made a preliminary inspection in search of the handiest point of attack, a little twinkle of light caught his eye from behind a curtained window.

« The Devil! » he thought. « People awake! Some student or some saint, confound the crew! Can't they get drunk and lie in bed snoring like their neighbors! What's the good of curfew, and poor devils of bell-ringers jumping at a rope's end in bell-towers? What's the use of day, if people sit up all night? The gripes to them! » He grinned as he saw where his logic was leading him. « Every man to his business, after all, » added he; « and if they're awake, by the Lord, I may come by a supper honestly for once, and cheat the Devil. »

He went boldly to the door and knocked with an assured hand. On both previous occasions, he had knocked timidly and with some dread of attracting notice; but now when he had just discarded the thought of a burglarious entry, knocking at a door seemed a mighty simple and innocent proceeding. The sound of his blows echoed through the house with thin, phantasmal reverberations, as though it were quite empty; but these had scarcely died away before a measured tread drew near, a couple of bolts were withdrawn, and one wing was opened broadly, as though no guile or fear of guile were known to those within. A tall figure of a man, muscular and spare, but a little bent, confronted Villon. The head was massive in bulk, but finely sculptured; the nose blunt at the bottom, but refining upward to where it joined a pair of strong and honest eyebrows; the mouth and eyes surrounded with delicate markings, and the whole face based upon a thick white beard, boldly and squarely trimmed. Seen as it was by the light of a flickering hand-lamp, it looked perhaps nobler than it had a right to do; but it was a fine face, honorable rather than intelligent, strong, simple, and righteous.

«You knock late, sir,» said the old man in resonant, courteous tones.

Villon cringed, and brought up many servile words of apology: at a crisis of this sort, the beggar was uppermost in him, and the man of genius hid his head with confusion.

«You are cold,» repeated the old man, «and hungry? Well, step in.» And he ordered him into the house with a noble enough gesture.

«Some great seigneur,» thought Villon, as his host, setting down the lamp on the flagged pavement of the entry, shot the bolts once more into their places.

«You will pardon me if I go in front,» he said, when this was done; and he preceded the poet up-stairs into a large apartment, warmed with a pan of charcoal and lit by a great lamp hanging from the roof. It was very bare of furniture: only some gold plate on a sideboard; some folios; and a stand of armor between the windows. Some smart tapestry hung upon the walls, representing the crucifixion of our Lord in one piece, and in another a scene of shepherds and shepherdesses by a running stream. Over the chimney was a shield of arms.

«Will you seat yourself,» said the old man, «and forgive me if I leave you? I am alone in my house to-night, and if you are to eat I must forage for you myself.»

No sooner was his host gone than Villon leaped from the chair on which he had just seated himself, and began examining the room with the stealth and passion of a cat. He weighed the gold flagons in his hand, opened all the folios, and investigated the arms upon the shield, and the stuff with which the seats were lined. He raised the window curtains, and saw that the windows were set with rich stained glass, in figures, so far as he could see, of martial import. Then he stood in the middle of the room, drew a long breath, and retaining it with puffed cheeks, looked round and round him, turning on his heels, as if to impress every feature of the apartment on his memory.

« Seven pieces of plate, » he said. « If there had been ten, I would have risked it. A fine house, and a fine old master, so help me all the saints! »

And just then hearing the old man's tread returning along the corridor, he stole back to his chair, and began humbly toasting his wet legs before the charcoal pan.

His entertainer had a plate of meat in one hand and a jug of wine in the other. He set down the plate upon the table, motioning Villon to draw in his chair; and going to the sideboard, brought back two goblets, which he filled.

« I drink your better fortune, » he said, gravely touching Villon's cup with his own.

« To our better acquaintance, » said the poet, growing bold. A mere man of the people would have been awed by the courtesy of the old seigneur, but Villon was hardened in that matter: he had made mirth for great lords before now, and found them as black rascals as himself. And so he devoted himself to the viands with a ravenous gusto, while the old man, leaning backward, watched him with steady, curious eyes.

« You have blood on your shoulder, my man, » he said.

Montigny must have laid his wet right hand upon him as he left the house. He cursed Montigny in his heart.

« It was none of my shedding, » he stammered.

« I had not supposed so, » returned his host quietly. « A brawl? »

« Well, something of that sort, » Villon admitted with a quaver.

« Perhaps a fellow murdered? »

« Oh no, not murdered, » said the poet, more and more confused. « It was all fair play — murdered by accident. I had no hand in it, God strike me dead! » he added fervently.

« One rogue the fewer, I daresay, » observed the master of the house.

"You may dare to say that," agreed Villon, infinitely relieved. "As big a rogue as there is between here and Jerusalem. He turned up his toes like a lamb. But it was a nasty thing to look at. I daresay you've seen dead men in your time, my lord?" he added, glancing at the armor.

"Many," said the old man. "I have followed the wars, as you imagine."

Villon laid down his knife and fork, which he had just taken up again.

"Were any of them bald?" he asked.

"Oh yes, and with hair as white as mine."

"I don't think I should mind the white so much," said Villon. "His was red." And he had a return of his shuddering and tendency to laughter, which he drowned with a great draught of wine. "I'm a little put out when I think of it," he went on. "I knew him — damn him! And then the cold gives a man fancies — or the fancies give a man cold, I don't know which."

"Have you any money?" asked the old man.

"I have one white," returned the poet, laughing. "I got it out of a dead jade's stocking in a porch. She was as dead as Cæsar, poor wench, and as cold as a church, with bits of ribbon sticking in her hair. This is a hard world in winter for wolves and wenches and poor rogues like me."

"I," said the old man, "am Enguerrand de la Feuillée, seigneur de Brisetout, bailly du Patatrac. Who and what may you be?"

Villon rose and made a suitable reverence. "I am called Francis Villon," he said, "a poor Master of Arts of this university. I know some Latin, and a deal of vice. I can make chansons, ballades, lais, virelais, and roundels, and I am very fond of wine. I was born in a garret, and I shall not improbably die upon the gallows. I may add, my lord, that from this night forward I am your Lordship's very obsequious servant to command."

"No servant of mine," said the knight: "my guest for this evening, and no more."

"A very grateful guest," said Villon politely; and he drank in dumb show to his entertainer.

"You are shrewd," began the old man, tapping his forehead, "very shrewd; you have learning; you are a clerk: and yet you take a small piece of money off a dead woman in the street. Is it not a kind of theft?"

« It is a kind of theft much practiced in the wars, my lord.»

« The wars are the field of honor,» returned the old man proudly. « There a man plays his life upon the cast; he fights in the name of his lord the king, his Lord God, and all their Lordships the holy saints and angels.»

« Put it,» said Villon, « that I were really a thief: should I not play my life also, and against heavier odds?»

« For gain but not for honor.»

« Gain?» repeated Villon with a shrug. « Gain! The poor fellow wants supper, and takes it. So does the soldier in a campaign. Why, what are all these requisitions we hear so much about? If they are not gain to those who take them, they are loss enough to the others. The men-at-arms drink by a good fire, while the burgher bites his nails to buy them wine and wood. I have seen a good many plowmen swinging on trees about the country; ay, I have seen thirty on one elm, and a very poor figure they made: and when I asked some one how all these came to be hanged, I was told it was because they could not scrape together enough crowns to satisfy the men-at-arms.»

« These things are a necessity of war, which the low-born must endure with constancy. It is true that some captains drive over-hard: there are spirits in every rank not easily moved by pity; and indeed many follow arms who are no better than brigands.»

« You see,» said the poet, « you cannot separate the soldier from the brigand; and what is a thief but an isolated brigand with circumspect manners? I steal a couple of mutton chops, without so much as disturbing people's sleep; the farmer grumbles a bit, but sups none the less wholesomely on what remains. You come up blowing gloriously on a trumpet, take away the whole sheep, and beat the farmer pitifully into the bargain. I have no trumpet; I am only Tom, Dick, or Harry; I am a rogue and a dog, and hanging's too good for me — with all my heart: but just ask the farmer which of us he prefers; just find out which of us he lies awake to curse on cold nights.»

« Look at us two,» said his Lordship. « I am old, strong, and honored. If I were turned from my house to-morrow, hundreds would be proud to shelter me. Poor people would go out and pass the night in the streets with their children, if I merely hinted that I wished to be alone. And I find you up, wandering homeless, and picking farthings off dead women by the wayside!

I fear no man and nothing: I have seen you tremble and lose countenance at a word. I wait God's summons contentedly in my own house; or if it please the King to call me out again, upon the field of battle. You look for the gallows,—a rough, swift death, without hope or honor. Is there no difference between these two?»

«As far as to the moon,» Villon acquiesced. «But if I had been born lord of Brisetout, and you had been the poor scholar Francis, would the difference have been any the less? Should not I have been warming my knees at this charcoal pan, and would not you have been groping for farthings in the snow? Should not I have been the soldier, and you the thief?»

«A thief?» cried the old man. «I a thief! If you understood your words, you would repent them.»

Villon turned out his hands with a gesture of inimitable impudence. «If your Lordship had done me the honor to follow my argument!» he said.

«I do you too much honor in submitting to your presence,» said the knight. «Learn to curb your tongue when you speak with old and honorable men, or some one hastier than I may reprove you in a sharper fashion.» And he rose and paced the lower end of the apartment, struggling with anger and antipathy. Villon surreptitiously refilled his cup, and settled himself more comfortably in the chair, crossing his knees and leaning his head upon one hand and the elbow against the back of the chair. He was now replete and warm; and he was in no wise frightened for his host, having gauged him as justly as was possible between two such different characters. The night was far spent, and in a very comfortable fashion after all; and he felt morally certain of a safe departure on the morrow.

«Tell me one thing,» said the old man, pausing in his walk. «Are you really a thief?»

«I claim the sacred rights of hospitality,» returned the poet. «My lord, I am.»

«You are very young,» the knight continued.

«I should never have been so old,» replied Villon, showing his fingers, «if I had not helped myself with these ten talents. They have been my nursing mothers and my nursing fathers.»

«You may still repent and change.»

«I repent daily,» said the poet. «There are few people more given to repentance than poor Francis. As for change, let somebody change my circumstances. A man must continue to eat, if it were only that he may continue to repent.»

«The change must begin in the heart,» returned the old man solemnly.

«My dear lord,» answered Villon, «do you really fancy that I steal for pleasure? I hate stealing, like any other piece of work or of danger. My teeth chatter when I see a gallows. But I must eat, I must drink, I must mix in society of some sort. What the Devil! Man is not a solitary animal — *Cui Deus fœminam tradit.* Make me king's pantler — make me abbot of St. Denis — make me bailly of the Patatrac; and then I shall be changed indeed. But as long as you leave me the poor scholar Francis Villon, without a farthing, why, of course I remain the same.»

«The grace of God is all-powerful.»

«I should be a heretic to question it,» said Francis. «It has made you lord of Brisetout and bailly of the Patatrac: it has given me nothing but the quick wits under my hat and these ten toes upon my hands. May I help myself to wine? I thank you respectfully. By God's grace, you have a very superior vintage.»

The lord of Brisetout walked to and fro with his hands behind his back. Perhaps he was not yet quite settled in his mind about the parallel between thieves and soldiers; perhaps Villon had interested him by some cross-thread of sympathy; perhaps his wits were simply muddled by so much unfamiliar reasoning: but whatever the cause, he somehow yearned to convert the young man to a better way of thinking, and could not make up his mind to drive him forth again into the street.

«There is everything more than I can understand in this,» he said at length. «Your mouth is full of subtleties, and the Devil has led you very far astray; but the Devil is only a very weak spirit before God's truth, and all his subtleties vanish at a word of true honor, like darkness at morning. Listen to me once more. I learned long ago that a gentleman should live chivalrously and lovingly to God, and the king, and his lady; and though I have seen many strange things done, I have still striven to command my ways upon that rule. It is not only written in all noble histories, but in every man's heart, if he will take care to read. You speak of food and wine, and I know very well that hunger is a difficult trial to endure; but you do not speak of other wants: you say nothing of honor, of faith to God and other men, of courtesy, of love without reproach. It may be that I am not very wise,—and yet I think I am,—but you seem to me like one who has lost his way and made a great error in life. You are attending to the little wants, and you have totally forgotten the great and only real ones, like a man who should be doctoring toothache on the Judgment Day. For such things as honor and love and faith are not only nobler than food and drink, but indeed I think we desire them more, and suffer more sharply for their absence. I speak to you as I think you will most easily understand me. Are you not, while careful to fill your belly, disregarding another appetite in your heart, which spoils the pleasure of your life and keeps you continually wretched?»

Villon was sensibly nettled under all this sermonizing. «You think I have no sense of honor!» he cried. «I'm poor enough, God knows! It's hard to see rich people with their gloves, and you blowing in your hands. An empty belly is a bitter thing, although you speak so lightly of it. If you had had as many as I, perhaps you would change your tune. Any way I'm a thief—make the most of that; but I'm not a devil from hell, God strike me dead. I would have you to know I've an honor of my own, as good as yours, though I don't prate about it all day long, as if it was a God's miracle to have any. It seems quite natural to me; I keep it in its box till it's wanted. Why now, look you here, how long have I been in this room with you? Did you not tell me you were alone in the house? Look at your gold plate! You're strong, if you like, but you're old and unarmed, and I have my knife. What did I want but a jerk of the elbow, and here would have been you with the cold steel in your bowels, and there would have been me linking in the streets with an armful of golden cups! Did you suppose I hadn't wit enough to see that? And I scorned the action. There are your damned goblets, as safe as in a church; there are you, with your heart ticking as good as new; and here am I, ready to go out again as poor as I came in, with my one white that you threw in my teeth! And you think I have no sense of honor—God strike me dead!»

The old man stretched out his right arm. «I will tell you what you are,» he said. «You are a rogue, my man; an impudent and black-hearted rogue and vagabond. I have passed an hour with you. Oh! believe me, I feel myself disgraced! And you have eaten and drunk at my table. But now I am sick at your presence; the day has come, and the night-bird should be off to his roost. Will you go before, or after?»

«Which you please,» returned the poet, rising. «I believe you to be strictly honorable.» He thoughtfully emptied his cup. «I wish I could add you were intelligent,» he went on, knocking on his head with his knuckles. «Age! age! the brains stiff and rheumatic.»

The old man preceded him, from a point of self-respect; Villon followed, whistling, with his thumbs in his girdle.

«God pity you,» said the lord of Brisetout at the door.

«Good-by, papa,» returned Villon with a yawn. «Many thanks for the cold mutton.»

The door closed behind him. The dawn was breaking over the white roofs. A chill, uncomfortable morning ushered in the day. Villon stood and heartily stretched himself in the middle of the road.

«A very dull old gentleman,» he thought. «I wonder what his goblets may be worth.»

WILLIAM JAMES STILLMAN

(1828–)

William James Stillman is prominent among those American writers whose lives are spent for the most part away from the country of their birth. His writings partake to a degree of the character of this voluntary exile; being somewhat desultory, concerned with what is of uppermost importance at the moment, — whether a search for a rare intaglio in forgotten little streets of Rome, or an insurrection in Crete, whither the author has wandered, or a discussion concerning the identity of an exhumed Greek statue. Yet these seemingly ephemeral magazine articles are of a true literary quality, witnessing to deep and fine perceptions of art and life underneath their surface carelessness. Mr. Stillman began his life as an artist, but was drawn by its natural currents into the career of a writer. Born in Schenectady in 1828, he was graduated from Union College in 1848; beginning soon after the study of painting under F. E. Church. He was for a time a resident artist in New York city, where he established with Mr. Durand the first art journal ever published in this country, the Crayon. After the year 1870 he devoted himself, however, exclusively to literature; yet his art training proved invaluable to him in his office of critic, enabling him to understand and to formulate the instincts of his artistic temperament. From 1861 to 1865 he was United States consul in Rome; holding the same office in Crete from 1865 to 1869. He was therefore a witness of the insurrection in that island, concerning which he wrote the volume entitled 'The Cretan Insurrection.' For many years he was a regular staff correspondent of the London Times, being stationed first at Athens, and afterward at Rome; and for another long period he was art critic of the New York Evening Post. His environment has been peculiarly well adapted to his temperament: a fierce, free soul, rejoicing in beauty and battle, he is equally at home in the still art galleries of Florence and Rome, and in scenes of strife. His appreciation of art is subtle and intimate, in the nature of instinct, as is also his appreciation of nature; though in this he is more mystical, more deeply touched with the invisible soul of things. He was one of the first artists who penetrated the Adirondacks, feeling to the uttermost the almost oppressive beauty of the wilderness. His simple, sensuous, and passionate love of art leads him directly back to Titian.

«In our time we have a new ideal, a new and maybe a higher development of intellectual art; and as great a soul as Titian's might to-day reach further towards the reconciled perfections of graphic art: but what he did, no one can now do; the glory of that time has passed away, its unreasoning faith, its wanton instinct,—reveling in art like children in the sunshine, and rejoicing in childlike perception of the pomp and glory which overlay creation, unconscious of effort, indifferent to science,—all gone with the fairies, the saints, the ecstatic visions which framed their poor lives in gold. Only, still reflecting the glory, as eastern mountains the sunken sun, came a few sympathetic souls kindling into like glow with faint perception of what had passed from the whole world beside: Velasquez, Rubens, Rembrandt, Watteau, Reynolds, Gainsborough, Turner, and Delacroix kept the line of color, now at last utterly extinguished. Now we reason, now we see facts; sentiment is out of joint, and appearances are known to be liars; we have found the greater substance: we kindle with the utilities, and worship the aspiring spirit of a common humanity; we banish the saints from our souls and the gewgaws from our garments, and walk clothed and in our right mind: . . . but we have lost the art of painting; for when Eugène Delacroix died, the last painter (visible above the man) who understood art as Titian understood it, and painted with such art as Veronese's, passed away, leaving no pupil or successor. It is as when the last scion of a kingly race dies in some alien land.»

Again he writes of the Venetian painters: «Their lives developed their instincts and their instincts their art;» and of a modern painting: «It is in the minor key of that lovely Eastern color-work such as we see in the Persian carpets, and to me always something weird and mysterious and touching, like the tones of an Æolian harp, or the greeting of certain sad-voiced children touched by the shadow of death before their babyhood is gone.» These passages indicate an unusual degree of sensitiveness to both the spirit and matter of art products,—a sensitiveness especially marked in Mr. Stillman's articles on the ‹Old Italian Masters› contributed to the Century Magazine.

The side of his nature which is congenial with struggle is exhibited in high light in ‹The Cretan Insurrection›; and ‹Herzegovina,› a book dealing with the insurrection of 1875–76 in that country. Regarding the Eastern question he writes: «The interests of civilization—of Europe entire—demand its [the Mussulman government's] replacement by a new government which shall be amenable to those interests and progress. . . . Having once admitted the necessity for its cessation, we shall more quickly find an accord over the manner of replacing it. It is in attempting to reform it that the danger lies.» Besides his various magazine articles on subjects of art or politics, and the two books already mentioned, Mr. Stillman has published ‹Turkish Rule and Turkish Warfare,› ‹The Acropolis of Athens,› and ‹On the Track of Ulysses.›

BILLY AND HANS: A TRUE HISTORY

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So long as the problem of the possession of the capacity of reasoning by the animals of lower rank than man in creation is investigated through those of their species that have been domesticated, and in which the problem of heredity has become complicated with human influence, and the natural instincts with an artificial development of their faculties, no really valuable conclusions can be arrived at. It is only when we take the native gifts of an animal under investigation, at least without the intervention of any trace of heredity and of what under teaching may become a second nature, that we can estimate in scientific exactitude the measure of intelligence of one of the lower animals. The ways of a dog or cat are the result of innumerable generations of ancestors reared in intimate relations with the human master mind. As subjects for investigation into the question of animal character, they are therefore misleading, and the wild creature must be taken. And so far as my observation goes, the squirrel, of all the small animals, shows at once the most character and the most affection; and I believe that the history of two that I have lately lost has a dramatic quality which makes it worth recording.

In my favorite summer resort at the lower edge of the Black Forest, the quaint old town of Lauffenburg, a farmer's boy one day brought me a young squirrel for sale. He was a tiny creature, probably not yet weaned: a variation on the ordinary type of the European *Sciurus* (*Sciurus vulgaris*), gray instead of the usual red, and with black tail and ears; so that at first, as he contented himself with drinking his milk and sleeping, I was not sure that he was not a dormouse. But examination of the paws, with their delicate anatomy, so marvelously like the human hand in their flexibility and handiness, and the graceful curl of his tail, settled the question of genus; and mindful of my boyhood and early pets, I bought him and named him Billy. From the first moment that he became my companion he gave me his entire confidence, and accepted his domestication without the least indication that he considered it captivity. There is generally a short stage of mute rebellion in wild creatures before they come to accept us entirely as their friends,—a longing for freedom which makes precautions against escape necessary. This never appeared in Billy: he came to me for his bread and milk, and slept in my pocket from the first, and enjoyed being caressed as completely as if he had been born under my roof. No other animal is so clean in its personal habits as the squirrel when in health; and Billy soon left the basket which cradled his infancy, and habitually slept under a fold of my bed-cover, sometimes making his way to my pillow and sleeping by my cheek: and he never knew what a cage was except when traveling, and even then for the most part he slept in my pocket. He went with me to the table d'hôte, and when invited out sat on the edge of the table and ate his bit of bread with a decorum that made him the admiration of all the children in the hotel, so that he accompanied me in all my journeys. He acquired a passion for tea sweet and warm, and to my indulgence of this taste I fear I owe his early loss. He had full liberty to roam in my room: but his favorite resort was my work-table when I was at work; and when his diet became nuts he used to hide them among my books, and then come to hunt them out again, like a child with its toys. I sometimes found my typewriter stopped, and discovered a hazelnut in the works. And when tired of his hide-and-seek he would come to the edge and nod to me, to indicate that he wished to go into my pocket or be put down to run about the room; and he soon made a limited language of movements of his head to tell me his few wants,—food, drink, to sleep, or to take a climb on the highest piece of furniture in the room. He was from the beginning devoted to me, and naturally became like a spoiled child. If I gave him an uncracked nut, he rammed it back into my hand to be cracked for him with irresistible persistence. I did as many parents do, and indulged him, to his harm and my own later grief. I could not resist that coaxing nodding, and gave him what he wished,—tea when I had mine, and cracked his nuts, to the injury of his teeth, I was told. In short, I made him as happy as I knew how.

Early in my possession of him I cast about if I might find in the neighborhood a companion of the other sex for him; and when finally I heard that in a village just across the Rhine there was a captive squirrel for sale, I sent my son with orders to buy it if a female. It turned out to be a male; but he bought it just the same,—a bright, active, and quite unreconciled prisoner, two months older than Billy, of the orthodox red, just tamed enough to take his food from the hand, but accustomed to be kept with his neck in a collar, to which there was attached a fathom of light dog-chain. He refused with his utmost energy to be handled; and as it was not possible to keep the little creature in the torture of that chain,—for I refuse to keep a caged creature,—I cut the collar and turned him loose in my chamber, where he kept involuntary company with Billy. The imprisonment of the half-tamed but wholly unreconciled animal was perhaps as painful to me as to him, and my first impulse was to turn him out into his native forest to take his chances of life; but I considered that he was already too far compromised with Mother Nature for this to be prudent: for having learned to take his food from a man, the first attack of hunger was sure to drive him to seek it where he had been accustomed to find it; and the probable consequence was being knocked on the head by a village boy, or at best re-consigned to a worse captivity than mine. He had no mother, and he was still little more than a baby; so I decided to keep him and make him as happy as he would let me. His name was Hans. Had I released him as I thought to do, I had saved myself one sorrow, and this history had lost its interest.

After a little strangeness, the companionship between the two became as perfect as the utterly diverse nature of their squirrelships would permit. Billy was social and as friendly as a little dog, Hans always a little morose and not over-ready to accept familiarities; Billy always making friendly advances to his companion, which were at first unnoticed, and afterward only submitted to with equanimity. It was as if Billy had accepted the position of the spoiled child of the family, and Hans reluctantly that of an elder brother who is always expected to make way for the pet and baby of the house. Billy was full of fun, and delighted to tease Hans, when he was sleeping, by nibbling at his toes and ears, biting him playfully anywhere he could get at him; and Hans, after a little indignant bark, would bolt away and find another place to sleep in. As they both had the freedom of my large bedroom,—the door of which was carefully guarded, as Hans was always on the lookout for a chance to bolt out into the unknown,—they had plenty of room for climbing, and comparative freedom; and after a little time Hans adopted Billy's habit of passing the night in the fold of my bed-rug, and even of nestling with Billy near my head. Billy was from the beginning a bad sleeper, and in his waking moments his standing amusement was nibbling at Hans, who used to break out of his sleep and go to the foot of the bed to lie; but never for long, for he always worked his way back to Billy, and nestled down again. When I gave Hans a nut, Billy would wait for him to crack it, and deliberately take it out of his jaws and eat it,—to which Hans submitted without a fight, or a snarl even, though at first he held on a little; but the good-humor and caressing ways of Billy were as irresistible with Hans as with us, and I never knew him to retaliate in any way.

No two animals of the most domesticated species could have differed in disposition more than these. During the first phase of Hans's life he never lost his repugnance to being handled, while Billy delighted in being fondled. The European squirrel is by nature one of the most timid of animals, even more so than the hare, being equaled in this respect only by the exquisite flying-squirrel of America; and when it is frightened, as for instance when held fast in any way or in a manner that alarms it, it will bite even the most familiar hand, the feeling being apparently that it is necessary to gnaw away the ligature which holds it. Of course, considering the irreconcilability of Hans to captivity, I was obliged, much against my will, to get a cage for him to travel in; and I made a little dark chamber in the upper part of a wire bird-cage in which the two squirrels were put for traveling. During the first journeys the motion of the carriage or railway train made Hans quite frantic, while Billy took it with absolute unconcern. On stopping at a hotel, they were invariably released in my room.

Arriving at Rome, I fitted up a deep window recess for their home: but they always had the run of the study, and Hans, while never losing sight of a door left ajar, and often escaping into adjoining rooms, made himself apparently happy in his new quarters, climbing the high curtains, racing along the curtain poles, and at intervals making excursions to the top of the bookcase; though to both, the table at which I was at work soon became the favorite resort, and their antics there were as amusing as those of a monkey. Toward the end of the year Billy developed an indolent habit, which I now can trace to the disease that finally took him from us; but he never lost his love for my writing-table, where he used to lie and watch me at my work by the hour. Hans soon learned to climb down from their window bench, and up my legs and arms to the writing-table, and down again by the same road when he was tired of his exercises with the pencils or penholders he found there, or of hunting out the nuts which he had hidden the day before among the books and papers; but I never could induce him to stay in my pocket with Billy, who on cold days preferred sleeping there, as the warmth of my body was more agreeable than that of their fur-lined nest. There was something uncanny in Billy,— a preternatural animal intelligence which one sees, generally, only in animals that have had training and heredity to work on. He soon learned to indicate to me his few wants: and one of the things which will never fade from my memory is the pretty way in which he used to come to the edge of the window bench and nod his head to me to show that he wished to be taken; for he soon learned that it was easier to call to me and be taken than it was to climb down the curtain and run across the room to me. He nodded and wagged his head until I went to him, and his flexible nose wrinkled into the grotesque semblance of a smile, with all the seductive entreaty an animal could show; and somehow we learned to understand each other so well that I rarely mistook his want, were it water or food, or to climb, or to get on my table, or rest in my pocket. Notwithstanding all the forbearance which Hans showed for his mischievous ways, and the real attachment he had for Billy, Billy clearly preferred me to his companion; and when during the following winter I was attacked by bronchitis, and was kept in my bedroom for several days, after a day of my absence my wife, going into the study, found him in an extraordinary state of excitement, which she said resembled hysterics, and he insisted on being taken. It occurred to her that he wanted me, and she brought him up-stairs to my bedroom, when he immediately pointed to be taken to me; and as she was curious to see what he would do, and stopped at the threshold, he bit her hand gently to spur her forward to the bed. When put on the bed, he nestled down in the fur of my bed-cover, perfectly contented. As long as I kept my room he was brought up every day, and passed the day on my bed. At other times the two slept together in an open box lined with fur,— or what they seemed greatly to delight in, a wisp of new-mown hay,— or the bend of the window-curtain, so nestled together that it was hard to distinguish whether there were one or two.

Some instincts of the woods they were long losing the use of, as the habit of often changing their sleeping-places. I provided them with several, of which the ultimate favorite was the bag of the window curtain; but sometimes when Billy was missing, he was found in my waste-paper basket, and even in the drawer of my typewriter desk, asleep. In their native forests these squirrels have this habit of changing their nests; and the mother will carry her little ones from one tree to another to hide their resting-place, as if she suspected the mischievous plans of the boys to hunt them — and probably she does. But the nest I made my squirrels in their traveling-carriage, of hard cardboard well lined with fur, suited the hiding and secluding ways of Hans for a long time best of all; and he abandoned it entirely only when he grew so familiar as not to care to hide. They also lost the habit of hiding their surplus food when they found food never wanting.

When the large cones of the stone-pine came into the market late in the autumn, I got some to give them a taste of fresh nuts; and the frantic delight with which Hans recognized the relation to his national fir-cones, far away and slight as it was, was touching. He raced around the huge and impenetrable cone, tried it from every side, gnawed at the stem and then at the apex, but in vain. Yet he persisted. The odor of the pine seemed an intoxication to him; and the eager satisfaction with which he split the nuts, once taken out for him, even when Billy was watching him to confiscate them when open, was very interesting: for he had never seen the fruit of the stone-pine, and knew only the tiny things which the fir of the Northern forest bears; and to extricate the pine-nuts from their strong and hard cones was impossible to his tiny teeth. As for Billy, he was content to sit and look on while Hans gnawed, and to take the kernel from him when he had split the nut; and the charming *bonhomie* with which he appropriated it, and with which Hans submitted to the piracy, was a study.

The friendship between the two was very interesting: for while Billy generally preferred being with me to remaining on his window bench with Hans, he had intervals when he insisted on being with Hans; while the latter seemed to care for nothing but Billy, and would not remain long away from him willingly as long as Billy lived. When the summer came again, being unable to leave them with servants or the housekeeper, I put them in their cage once more, and took them back to Lauffenburg for my vacation. Hans still retained his impatience at the confinement even of my large chamber, and with a curious diligence watched the door for a crack to escape by, though in all other respects he seemed happy and at home and perfectly familiar; and though always in this period of his life shy with strangers, he climbed over me with perfect nonchalance. Billy, on the contrary, refused freedom; and when I took him out into his native woods he ran about a little, and came back to find his place in my pocket as naturally as if it had been his birth-nest. But the apparent yearning of Hans for liberty was to me an exquisite pain. He would get up on the window-bench, looking out one way on the rushing Rhine, and the other on the stretching pine forest, and stand with one paw on the sash and the other laid across his breast, and turn his bright black eyes from one to the other view incessantly, and with a look of passionate eagerness which made my heart ache. If I could have found a friendly park where he could have been turned loose in security from hunger and the danger of hunting boys and the snares which beset a wild life, I would have released him at once. I never so felt the wrong and mutual pain of imprisonment of God's free creatures as then with poor Hans, whose independent spirit had always made him the favorite of the two with my wife; and now that the little drama of their lives is over, and Nature has taken them both to herself again, I can never think of this eager little creature with his passionate outlook over the Rhineland without tears. But in the Rhineland, under the pretext that they eat off the top twigs of the pine-trees and spoil their growth, they hunt the poor things with a malignancy that makes it a wonder that there is one left to be captured; and Hans's chance of life in those regions was the very least a creature could have. As to the pretext of the destruction of the pine-tops, I have looked at them in every part of the Black Forest that I have visited, and have never been able to discover one tree-top spoiled. It is possible that the poor little creatures, when famished, may eat the young twigs of trees; but in my opinion the accusation is only the case of the wolf who wants an excuse to eat the lamb. Hans and Billy were both fond of roses and lettuce; but nothing else in the way of vegetation, other than fruits and nuts, would they eat. But when I remember that in my boyhood I have joined in squirrel hunts, and that my murderous lead has often crashed through their tender frames, I have no right to cast stones at the Germans, but with pain and humiliation remember my cruelty. I would sooner be myself shot than shoot another. I feel so keenly their winsome grace when I can watch them in freedom that I cannot draw the line between them and myself, except that they are worthier of life than I am. The evolutionists tell us that we are descended from some common ancestor of the monkey. It may be so: and if, as has been conjectured by one scientist, that was the lemur, which is the link between the monkey and the squirrel, I should not object; but I hope that we branched off at the *Sciurus*, for I would willingly be the far-off cousin of my little pets.

But before leaving Rome for my summer vacation at Lauffenburg, the artificial habits of life, and my ignorance of the conditions of squirrel health, began to work their usual consequences. Billy had begun to droop, and symptoms of some organic malady appeared; though he grew more and more devoted to me, his ambition to climb and disport himself diminished: and it was clear that his civilized life had done for him what it does for many of us,— shortened his existence. He never showed signs of pain, but grew more sluggish, and would come to me and rest. licking my hand like a little dog, and was as happy so as his nature could show. They both hailed again with greedy enthusiasm the first nuts, fresh and crisp, and the first peaches, which I went to Basel to purchase for them; and what the position permitted me I supplied them with, with a guilty feeling that I could never atone for the loss of what they lost with freedom. I tried to make them happy in any way with my limited abilities; and, the vacation over, we went back to Rome and the fresh pine-cones and their window niche.

But there Billy grew rapidly worse, and I realized that the tragedy of our little ménage was coming. He grew apathetic; and would lie with his great black eyes looking into space, as if in a dream. It became tragedy for me: for the symptoms were the same as those of a dear little fellow who had first rejoiced my father's heart in the years gone by, and who lies in an old English church-yard; whose last hours I watched lapsing into the eternity beyond, painlessly, and he, thank God! understanding nothing of the great change. When he could no longer speak, he beckoned me to lay my head on the same pillow. He died of blood-poisoning, as I found after Billy's death that he also did; and the identity of the symptoms (of the cause of which I then understood nothing) brought back the memory of that last solitary night when my boy passed from under my care, and his eyes, large and dark like Billy's, grew dim and vacant like his.

Billy, too, clung the closer to me as the end approached; and when the apathy left him almost no recognition of things around, he would grasp one of my fingers with his two paws, and lick it till he tired. It was clear that death was at hand: and on the last afternoon I took him out into the grounds of the Villa Borghese to lie in the sunshine, and get perhaps a moment of return to Mother Nature; but when I put him on the grass in the warm light he only looked away into vacancy, and lay still, and after a little dreamily indicated to me to take him up again: and I remembered that on the day before his death I had carried Russie into the green fields, hoping they would revive him for one breathing-space, for I knew that death was on him; and he lay and looked off beyond the field and flowers; and now he almost seemed to be looking out of dear little Billy's eyes.

I went out to walk early the next morning, and when I returned I found Billy dead, still warm, and sitting up in his box of fresh hay in the attitude of making his toilet; for to the last he would wash his face and paws, and comb out his tail, even when his strength no longer sufficed for more than the mere form of it. I am not ashamed to say that I wept like a child. The dear little creature had been to me not merely a pet to amuse my vacant hours,—though many of those most vacant which sleepless nights bring had been diverted by his pretty ways as he shared my bed, and by his singular devotion to me, —but he had been as a door open into the world of God's lesser creatures, an apostle of pity and tenderness for all living things, and his memory stands on the eternal threshold nodding and beckoning to me to enter in and make part of the creation I had ignored till he taught it to me; so that while life lasts I can no longer inflict pain or death upon the least of God's creatures. If it be true that "to win the secret of a weed's plain heart" gives the winner a clue to the hidden things of the spiritual life, how much more the conscient and reciprocal love which Billy and I bore, and I could gladly say still bear, each other, must widen the sphere of spiritual sympathy; which, widening still, reaches at last the eternal source of all life and love, and finds indeed that one touch of nature makes all things kin. Living and dying, Billy has opened to me a window into the universe, of the existence of which I had no suspicion; his little history is an added chamber to that eternal mansion into which my constant and humble faith assures me that I shall some time enter; he has helped me to a higher life. If love could confer immortality, he would share eternity with me, and I would thank the Creator for the companionship. And who knows? Thousands of human beings to whom we dare not deny the possession of immortal souls have not half Billy's claim to live forever. May not the Indian philosopher with his transmigration of souls have had some glimpses of a truth?

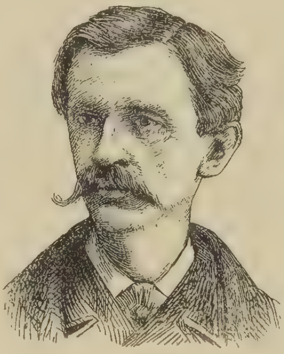
But my history is only half told. When I found the little creature dead, and laid him down in an attitude befitting death, Hans came to him, and making a careful and curious study of him, seemed to realize that something strange had come: and stretched himself out at full length on the body, evidently trying to warm it into life again, or feeling that something was wanting which he might impart; and this failing, began licking the body. When he found that all this was of no avail, he went away into the remotest corner of his window niche, refusing to lie any longer in their common bed or stay where they had been in the habit of staying together. All day he would touch neither food nor drink; and for days following he took no interest in anything, hardly touching his food. Fearing that he would starve himself to death, I took him out on the large open terrace of my house, where, owing to his old persistent desire to escape, I had never dared trust him, and turned him loose among the plants. He wandered a few steps as if bewildered, looked all about him, and then came deliberately to me, climbed my leg, and went voluntarily into the pocket Billy loved to lie in, and in which I had never been able to make Hans stay for more than a minute or so. The whole nature of the creature became changed. He reconciled himself to life, but never again became what he had been before. His gayety was gone, his wandering ambitions were forgotten, and his favorite place was my pocket,— Billy's pocket. From that time he lost all desire to escape: even when I took him out into the fields or woods he had no desire to leave me; but after a little turn, and a half-attempt to climb a tree, would come back voluntarily to me, and soon grew as fond of being caressed and stroked as Billy had been. It was as if the love he bore Billy had changed him to Billy's likeness. He never became as demonstrative as Billy was; and to my wife, who was fond of teasing him, he always showed a little pique, and even if buried in his curtain nest or in the fold of my rug, and asleep, he would scold if she approached within several yards of him: but to me he behaved as if he had consciously taken Billy's place. I sent to Turin to get him a companion, and the merchant sent me one guaranteed young and a female; but I found it a male, which died of old age within a few weeks of his arrival. Hans had hardly become familiarized with him when he died. The night before he died I came home late in the evening; and having occasion to go into my study, I was surprised, when I opened the door, to find Hans on the threshold nodding to me to be taken, with no attempt to escape as of old. I took him up, wondering what had disturbed him at an hour when he was never accustomed to be afoot, put him back in his bed, and went to mine. But thinking over the strange occurrence, I got up, dressed myself, and went down to see if anything was wrong; and found the new squirrel hanging under the curtain in which the two had been sleeping, with his hind claws entangled in the stuff, head down, and evidently very ill. He had probably felt death coming, and tried to get down and find a hiding-place, but got his claws entangled, and could not extricate them. He died the next day, and I took Hans to sleep in his old place in the fold of my bed-cover; where, with a few days' interruption, he slept as long as he lived. He insisted on being taken, in fact, when his sleeping-time came, and would come to the edge of his shelf and nod to me till I took him; or if I delayed, he would climb down the curtain and come to me. One night I was out late, and on reaching home I went to take him; and not finding him in his place, alarmed the house to look for him. After long search I found him sitting quietly under the chair I always occupied in the study. He got very impatient if I delayed putting him to bed; and like Billy, he used to bite my hand to indicate his discontent, gently at first, but harder and harder till I attended to him. When he saw that we were going up-stairs to the bedroom he became quiet.

Whether from artificial conditions of life or because he suffered from the loss of Billy (after whose death he never recovered his spirits), or as I fear, from a fall from some high piece of furniture,—for he loved still to be on any height, and his claws, grown too long, no longer held to the furniture, so that he had several heavy falls,—his hind legs became slowly paralyzed. He now ran with difficulty; but his eyes were as bright and his intelligence was as quick as ever, and his fore feet were as dexterous. His attachment to me increased as the malady progressed; and though from habit he always scolded a little when my wife approached him, he showed a great deal of affection for her toward the end, which was clearly approaching. Vacation came again, and I took him once more with me to the Black Forest, hoping that his mysterious intelligence might find some consolation in the native air. He was evidently growing weak very fast, and occasionally showed impatience as if in pain; but for the most of the time he rested quietly in my pocket, and was most happy when I gave him my hand for a pillow, sometimes, though rarely, licking the hand — for he was even then far more reserved in all his expressions of feeling than Billy. At times he would sit on the window bench, and scan the landscape with something of the old eagerness that used to give me so much pain, snuffing the mountain air eagerly for a half-hour, and then nod to go into my pocket again; and at other times, as if restless, would insist, in the way he had made me understand, that like a baby he wanted motion, and when I walked about with him he grew quiet and content again. At home he had been very fond of a dish of dried rose-leaves, in which he would wallow and burrow; and my wife sent him from Rome a little bag of them, which he enjoyed weakly for a little. But in his last days the time was spent by day mostly in my pocket, and by night on my bed with his head on my hand. It was only the morning before his death that he seemed really to suffer, and then a great restlessness came on him, and a disposition to bite convulsively whatever was near him: but at the end he lay quietly in my hand, and when the spasm was on him I gave him a little chloroform to inhale till it had passed; and when he breathed his last in my pocket, I knew that he was dead only by my hand on his heart. I buried him, as I had wished, in his native forest, in his bed of rose-leaves, digging a niche under a great granite bowlder. He had survived his companion little more than six months; and if the readers of my little history are disposed to think me weak when I say that his death was to me a great and lasting grief, I am not concerned to dispute their judgment. I have known grief in all its most blinding and varied forms, and I thank God that he constituted me loving enough to have kept a tender place in my heart "even for the least of these," the little companions of two years; and but for my having perhaps shortened their innocent lives, I thank him for having known and loved them as I have.

FRANK R. STOCKTON

(1834–)

FRANK R. STOCKTON holds a unique position among American makers of humorous fiction. His vein is so quaint and enjoyable, his invention so unfailing, that his work is a perennial source of pleasure. He was born in Philadelphia, April 5th, 1834, and is a graduate of the High School in that city. As a young man he worked at wood engraving as well as literature, furnishing illustrations for Vanity Fair and writing child stories; his first two books, ‘Roundabout Rambles’ and ‘Tales Out of School,’—like the later ‘What Might Have Been Expected,’ ‘A Jolly Fellowship,’ ‘The Story of Viteau,’ and a great number of delicious wonder stories,—being intended for the critical audience of children. Mr. Stockton was early a magazine contributor, his work appearing in the Philadelphia Post, the New York Hearth and Home, Scribner's, and St. Nicholas. His first successful book was the set of sketches called ‘Rudder Grange,’ which was published in 1879. It was widely welcomed as a fresh and amusing account of a picturesque phase of American life, and made Stockton's reputation as a humorist. His subsequent books—novels and collections of short stories—count up to a dozen or more, with great variety of motive.


FRANK R. STOCKTON

His special talent is for writing a tale, which in a few pages and with the lightest of touches, explicates an odd plot or delineates an odd character, dealing so gravely and logically with an absurd or impossible set of circumstances that they seem reality itself. More than once this singularly graphic quality has suggested to critical readers a likeness to Defoe; but he has an excellent style, while Defoe has none at all. His humor is sly and unobtruded, yet it pervades all his writing like an atmosphere. His longer stories—especially ‘The Adventures of Captain Horn’ (1895) and its sequel ‘Mrs. Cliff's Yacht’ (1897)—indicate a broader range than might have been inferred from his earlier whimsies. Both stories in their romantic incidents introduce an element of strong narrative interest. Whether in these broader delineations, or in the delicately turned fantasies of his short tales, Mr. Stockton's quality is unmistakable and distinctive. His inventions are always refined and wholesome; introducing the reader to the company of well-bred folk, whether they know anything of etiquette or not. Even his burglars are not coarse. His humor is most kindly, having the sparkle of dry wine; and his manner of writing is quite as much a merit as is his fecund originality in the imagining of the story. Mr. Stockton resides in Madison, New Jersey, and devotes himself to literary production. He is essentially a man of letters.

THE CASTING AWAY OF MRS. LECKS AND MRS. ALESHINE

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I WAS on my way from San Francisco to Yokohama, when in a very desultory and gradual manner I became acquainted with Mrs. Lecks and Mrs. Aleshine. The steamer, on which I was making a moderately rapid passage toward the land of the legended fan and the lacquered box, carried a fair complement of passengers, most of whom were Americans; and among these, my attention was attracted from the very first day of the voyage to two middle-aged women who appeared to me very unlike the ordinary traveler or tourist. At first sight they might have been taken for farmers' wives who, for some unusual reason, had determined to make a voyage across the Pacific; but on closer observation, one would have been more apt to suppose that they belonged to the families of prosperous tradesmen in some little country town, where, besides the arts of rural housewifery, there would be opportunities of becoming acquainted in some degree with the ways and manners of the outside world. They were not of that order of persons who generally take first-class passages on steamships, but the state-room occupied by Mrs. Lecks and Mrs. Aleshine was one of the best in the vessel; and although they kept very much to themselves and showed no desire for the company or notice of the other passengers, they evidently considered themselves quite as good as any one else, and with as much right to voyage to any part of the world in any manner or style which pleased them.

Mrs. Lecks was a rather tall woman, large-boned and muscular; and her well-browned countenance gave indications of that conviction of superiority which gradually grows up in the minds of those who, for a long time, have had absolute control of the destinies of a state, or the multifarious affairs of a country household. Mrs. Aleshine was somewhat younger than her friend, somewhat shorter, and a great deal fatter. She had the same air of reliance upon her individual worth that characterized Mrs. Lecks; but there was a certain geniality about her which indicated that she would have a good deal of forbearance for those who never had had the opportunity or the ability of becoming the thoroughly good housewife which she was herself.

These two worthy dames spent the greater part of their time on deck, where they always sat together in a place at the stern of the vessel which was well sheltered from wind and weather. As they sat thus they were generally employed in knitting; although this occupation did not prevent them from keeping up what seemed to me, as I passed them in my walks about the deck, a continuous conversation. From a question which Mrs. Lecks once asked me about a distant sail, our acquaintance began. There was no one on board for whose society I particularly cared; and as there was something quaint and odd about these countrywomen on the ocean which interested me, I was glad to vary my solitary promenades by an occasional chat with them. They were not at all backward in giving me information about themselves. They were both widows, and Mrs. Aleshine was going out to Japan to visit a son who had a position there in a mercantile house. Mrs. Lecks had no children, and was accompanying her friend because, as she said, she would not allow Mrs. Aleshine to make such a voyage as that by herself; and because, being quite able to do so, she did not know why she should not see the world as well as other people.

These two friends were not educated women. They made frequent mistakes in their grammar, and a good deal of Middle States provincialism showed itself in their pronunciation and expressions. But although they brought many of their rural ideas to sea with them, they possessed a large share of that common-sense which is available anywhere, and they frequently made use of it in a manner which was very amusing to me. I think also that they found in me a quarry of information concerning nautical matters, foreign countries, and my own affairs, the working of which helped to make us very good ship friends.

Our steamer touched at the Sandwich Islands; and it was a little more than two days after we left Honolulu, that about nine o'clock in the evening we had the misfortune to come into collision with an eastern-bound vessel. The fault was entirely due to the other ship; the lookout on which, although the night was rather dark and foggy, could easily have seen our lights in time to avoid collision, if he had not been asleep or absent from his post. Be this as it may, this vessel, which appeared to be a small steamer, struck us with great force near our bows, and then backing disappeared into the fog, and we never saw or heard of her again. The general opinion was that she was injured very much more than we were, and that she probably sank not very long after the accident; for when the fog cleared away, about an hour afterward, nothing could be seen of her lights.

As it usually happens on occasions of accidents at sea, the damage to our vessel was at first reported to be slight; but it was soon discovered that our injuries were serious, and indeed disastrous. The hull of our steamer had been badly shattered on the port bow, and the water came in at a most alarming rate. For nearly two hours the crew and many of the passengers worked at the pumps, and everything possible was done to stop the enormous leak: but all labor to save the vessel was found to be utterly unavailing; and a little before midnight the captain announced that it was impossible to keep the steamer afloat, and that we must all take to the boats. The night was now clear, the stars were bright, and as there was but little wind, the sea was comparatively smooth. With all these advantages, the captain assured us there was no reason to apprehend danger; and he thought that by noon of the following day we could easily make a small inhabited island, where we could be sheltered and cared for until we should be taken off by some passing vessel.

There was plenty of time for all necessary preparations, and these were made with much order and subordination. Some of the ladies among the cabin passengers were greatly frightened, and inclined to be hysterical. There were pale faces also among the gentlemen. But everybody obeyed the captain's orders, and all prepared themselves for the transfer to the boats. The first officer came among us, and told each of us what boats we were to take, and where we were to place ourselves on deck. I was assigned to a large boat which was to be principally occupied by steerage passengers; and as I came up from my state-room, where I had gone to secure my money and some portable valuables, I met on the companion-way Mrs. Lecks and Mrs. Aleshine, who expressed considerable dissatisfaction when they found that I was not going in the boat with them. They however hurried below, and I went on deck; where in about ten minutes I was joined by Mrs. Lecks, who apparently had been looking for me. She told me she had something very particular to say to me, and conducted me toward the stern of the vessel; where, behind one of the deck-houses, we found Mrs. Aleshine.

« Look here,» said Mrs. Lecks, leading me to the rail and pointing downward, « do you see that boat there? It has been let down, and there is nobody in it. The boat on the other side has just gone off, full to the brim. I never saw so many people crowded into a boat. The other ones will be just as packed, I expect. I don't see why we shouldn't take this empty boat, now we've got a chance, instead of squeezin' ourselves into those crowded ones. If any of the other people come afterward, why, we shall have our choice of seats; and that's considerable of a p'int, I should say, in a time like this.»

« That's so,» said Mrs. Aleshine, « and me and Mrs. Lecks would 'a' got right in when we saw the boat was empty, if we hadn't been afraid to be there without any man—for it might have floated off, and neither of us don't know nothin' about rowin'. And then Mrs. Lecks she thought of you, supposin' a young man who knew so much about the sea would know how to row.»

« Oh, yes,» said I, « but I cannot imagine why this boat should have been left empty. I see a keg of water in it, and the oars, and some tin cans; and so I suppose it has been made ready for somebody. Will you wait here a minute until I run forward and see how things are going on there?»

Amidships and forward I saw that there was some confusion among the people who were not yet in their boats, and I found that there was to be rather more crowding than at first was expected. People who had supposed that they were to go in a certain boat found there no place, and were hurrying to other boats. It now became plain to me that no time should be lost in getting into the small boat which Mrs. Lecks had pointed out, and which was probably reserved for some favored persons, as the officers were keeping the people forward and amidships, the other stern-boat having already departed. But as I acknowledged no reason why any one should be regarded with more favor than myself and the two women who were waiting for me, I slipped quietly aft, and joined Mrs. Lecks and Mrs. Aleshine.

« We must get in as soon as we can,» said I in a low voice, « for this boat may be discovered, and then there will be a rush for it. I suspect it may have been reserved for the captain and some of the officers, but we have as much right in it as they.»

«And more too,» replied Mrs. Lecks; « for we had nothin' to do with the steerin' and smashin'.»

« But how are we goin' to get down there?» said Mrs. Aleshine. « There's no steps.»

« That is true,» said I. « I shouldn't wonder if this boat is to be taken forward when the others are filled. We must scramble down as well as we can by the tackle at the bow and stern. I'll get in first and keep her close to the ship's side.»

« That's goin' to be a scratchy business,» said Mrs. Lecks; « and I'm of the opinion we ought to wait till the ship has sunk a little more, so we'll be nearer to the boat.»

« It won't do to wait,» said I, « or we shall not get in at all.»

«And goodness gracious!» exclaimed Mrs. Aleshine, « I can't stand here and feel the ship sinkin' cold-blooded under me, till we've got where we can make an easy jump!»

« Very well, then,» said Mrs. Lecks, « we won't wait. But the first thing to be done is for each one of us to put on one of these life-preservers. Two of them I brought from Mrs. Aleshine's and my cabin, and the other I got next door, where the people had gone off and left it on the floor. I thought if anythin' happened on the way to the island, these would give us a chance to look about us; but it seems to me we'll need 'em more gettin' down them ropes than anywhere else. I did intend puttin' on two myself to make up for Mrs. Aleshine's fat; but you must wear one of 'em, sir, now that you are goin' to join the party.»

As I knew that two life-preservers would not be needed by Mrs. Lecks, and would greatly inconvenience her, I accepted the one offered me; but declined to put it on until it should be necessary, as it would interfere with my movements.

« Very well,» said Mrs. Lecks, « if you think you are safe in gettin' down without it. But Mrs. Aleshine and me will put ours on before we begin sailor-scramblin'. We know how to do it, for we tried 'em on soon after we started from San Francisco. And now, Barb'ry Aleshine, are you sure you've got everythin' you want? for it'll be no use thinkin' about anythin' you've forgot after the ship has sunk out of sight.»

« There's nothin' else I can think of,» said Mrs. Aleshine,— «at least nothin' I can carry; and so I suppose we may as well begin, for your talk of the ship sinkin' under our feet gives me a sort o' feelin' like an oyster creepin' up and down my back.»

Mrs. Lecks looked over the side at the boat, into which I had already descended. «I'll go first, Barb'ry Aleshine,» said she, «and show you how.»

The sea was quiet, and the steamer had already sunk so much that Mrs. Lecks's voice sounded frightfully near me, although she spoke in a low tone.

«Watch me,» said she to her companion. «I'm goin' to do just as he did, and you must follow in the same way.»

So saying, she stepped on a bench by the rail; then, with one foot on the rail itself, she seized the ropes which hung from one of the davits to the bow of the boat. She looked down for a moment, and then she drew back.

«It's no use,» she said. «We must wait until she sinks more, an' I can get in easier.»

This remark made me feel nervous. I did not know at what moment there might be a rush for this boat, nor when indeed the steamer might go down. The boat amidships on our side had rowed away some minutes before, and through the darkness I could distinguish another boat, near the bows, pushing off. It would be too late now for us to try to get into any other boat, and I did not feel that there was time enough for me to take this one to a place where the two women could more easily descend to her. Standing upright, I urged them not to delay.

«You see,» said I, «I can reach you as soon as you swing yourself off the ropes, and I'll help you down.»

«If you're sure you can keep us from comin' down too sudden, we'll try it,» said Mrs. Lecks, «but I'd as soon be drowned as to get to an island with a broken leg. And as to Mrs. Aleshine, if she was to slip she'd go slam through that boat to the bottom of the sea. Now then, be ready! I'm comin' down!»

So saying, she swung herself off, and she was then so near me that I was able to seize her and make the rest of her descent comparatively easy. Mrs. Aleshine proved to be a more difficult subject. Even after I had a firm grasp of her capacious waist she refused to let go the ropes, for fear that she might drop into the ocean instead of the boat. But the reproaches of Mrs. Lecks and the downward weight of myself made her loosen her nervous grip; and although we came very near going overboard together, I safely placed her on one of the thwarts.

I now unhooked the tackle from the stern; but before casting off at the bow, I hesitated, for I did not wish to desert any of those who might be expecting to embark in this boat. But I could hear no approaching footsteps; and from my position, close to the side of the steamer, I could see nothing. Therefore I cast off, and taking the oars, I pushed away and rowed to a little distance, where I could get whatever view was possible of the deck of the steamer. Seeing no forms moving about, I called out, and receiving no answer, I shouted again at the top of my voice. I waited for nearly a minute; and hearing nothing and seeing nothing, I became convinced that no one was left on the vessel.

« They are all gone,» said I, « and we will pull after them as fast as we can.»

And I began to row toward the bow of the steamer, in the direction which the other boats had taken.

« It's a good thing you can row,» said Mrs. Lecks, settling herself comfortably in the stern-sheets, « for what Mrs. Aleshine and me would ha' done with them oars, I am sure I don't know.»

« I'd never have got into this boat,» said Mrs. Aleshine, « if Mr. Craig hadn't been here.»

« No, indeed,» replied her friend. « You'd ha' gone to the bottom, hangin' for dear life to them ropes.»

When I had rounded the bow of the steamer, which appeared to me to be rapidly settling in the water, I perceived at no great distance several lights which of course belonged to the other boats; and I rowed as hard as I could, hoping to catch up with them, or at least to keep sufficiently near. It might be my duty to take off some of the people who had crowded into the other boats, probably supposing that this one had been loaded and gone. How such a mistake could have taken place I could not divine, and it was not my business to do so. Quite certain that no one was left on the sinking steamer, all I had to do was to row after the other boats, and to overtake them as soon as possible. I thought it would not take me very long to do this; but after rowing for half an hour, Mrs. Aleshine remarked that the lights seemed as far off as, if not farther than, when we first started after them. Turning, I saw that this was the case, and was greatly surprised. With only two passengers I ought soon to have come up with those heavily laden boats; but after I had thought over it a little, I considered that as each of them was probably pulled by half a dozen stout sailors, it was not so very strange that they should make as good or better headway than I did.

It was not very long after this that Mrs. Lecks said that she thought that the lights on the other boats must be going out; and that this, most probably, was due to the fact that the sailors had forgotten to fill their lanterns before they started. « That sort of thing often happens,» she said, « when people leave a place in a hurry.»

But when I turned around, and peered over the dark waters, it was quite plain to me that it was not want of oil, but increased distance, which made those lights so dim. I could now perceive but three of them; and as the surface was agitated only by a gentle swell, I could not suppose that any of them were hidden from our view by waves. We were being left behind, that was certain; and all I could do was to row on as long and as well as I could in the direction which the other boats had taken. I had been used to rowing, and thought I pulled a good oar, and I certainly did not expect to be left behind in this way.

« I don't believe this boat has been emptied out since the last rain,» said Mrs. Aleshine; « for my feet are wet, though I didn't notice it before.»

At this I shipped my oars, and began to examine the boat. The bottom was covered with a movable floor of slats, and as I put my hand down I could feel the water welling up between the slats. The flooring was in sections; and lifting the one beneath me, I felt under it, and put my hand into six or eight inches of water.

The exact state of the case was now as plain to me as if it had been posted up on a bulletin-board. This boat had been found to be unseaworthy, and its use had been forbidden, all the people having been crowded into the others. This had caused confusion at the last moment, and of course we were supposed to be on some one of the other boats.

And now, here was I, in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, in a leaky boat with two middle-aged women!

«Anythin' the matter with the floor?» asked Mrs. Lecks.

I let the section fall back into its place and looked aft. By the starlight I could see that my two companions had each fixed upon me a steadfast gaze. They evidently felt that something was the matter, and wanted to know what it was. I did not hesitate for a moment to inform them. They appeared to me to be women whom it would be neither advisable nor possible to deceive in a case like this.

« This boat has a leak in it,» I said. « There is a lot of water in her already, and that is the reason we have got along so slowly.»

«And that is why,» said Mrs. Aleshine, « it was left empty. We ought to have known better than to expect to have a whole boat just for three of us. It would have been much more sensible, I think, if we had tried to squeeze into one of the others.»

« Now, Barb'ry Aleshine,» said Mrs. Lecks, « don't you begin findin' fault with good fortune when it comes to you. Here we've got a comfortable boat, with room enough to set easy and stretch out if we want to. If the water is comin' in, what we've got to do is to get it out again just as fast as we can. What's the best way to do that, Mr. Craig?»

« We must bail her out, and lose no time about it,» said I. « If I can find the leak I may be able to stop it.»

I now looked about for something to bail with, and the two women aided actively in the search. I found one leather scoop in the bow; but as it was well that we should all go to work, I took two tin cans that had been put in by some one who had begun to provision the boat, and proceeded to cut the tops from them with my jack-knife.

« Don't lose what's in 'em,» said Mrs. Lecks; « that is, if it's anythin' we'd be likely to want to eat. If it's tomatoes, pour it into the sea, for nobody ought to eat tomatoes put up in tins.»

I hastily passed the cans to Mrs. Lecks, and I saw her empty the contents of one into the sea, and those of the other on a newspaper which she took from her pocket and placed in the stern.

I pulled up the movable floor and threw it overboard, and then began to bail.

« I thought,» said Mrs. Aleshine, « that they always had pumps for leaks.»

« Now, Barb'ry Aleshine,» said Mrs. Lecks, « just gether yourself up on one of them seats and go to work. The less talkin' we do and the more scoopin', the better it'll be for us.»

I soon perceived that it would have been difficult to find two more valuable assistants in the bailing of a boat than Mrs. Lecks and Mrs. Aleshine. They were evidently used to work, and were able to accommodate themselves to the unusual circumstances in which they were placed. We threw out the water very rapidly, and every little while I stopped bailing and felt about to see if I could discover where it came in. As these attempts met with no success, I gave them up after a time, and set about bailing with new vigor, believing that if we could get the boat nearly dry, I should surely be able to find the leak.

But after working half an hour more, I found that the job would be a long one; and if we all worked at once, we should all be tired out at once, and that might be disastrous. Therefore I proposed that we should take turns in resting, and Mrs. Aleshine was ordered to stop work for a time. After this Mrs. Lecks took a rest, and when she went to work I stopped bailing and began again to search for the leak.

For about two hours we worked in this way, and then I concluded it was useless to continue any longer this vain exertion. With three of us bailing we were able to keep the water at the level we first found it; but with only two at work it slightly gained upon us, so that now there was more water in the boat than when we first discovered it. The boat was an iron one, and the leak in it I could neither find nor remedy. It had probably been caused by the warping of the metal under a hot sun; an accident which, I am told, frequently occurs to iron boats. The little craft, which would have been a life-boat had its air-boxes remained intact, was now probably leaking from stem to stern; and in searching for the leak without the protection of the flooring, my weight had doubtless assisted in opening the seams, for it was quite plain that the water was now coming in more rapidly than it did at first. We were very tired; and even Mrs. Lecks, who had all along counseled us to keep at work and not to waste one breath in talking, now admitted that it was of no use to try to get the water out of that boat.

It had been some hours since I had used the oars, but whether we had drifted or remained where we were when I stopped rowing, of course I could not know; but this mattered very little, —our boat was slowly sinking beneath us, and it could make no difference whether we went down in one spot or another. I sat and racked my brain to think what could be done in this fearful emergency. To bail any longer was useless labor, and what else was there that we could do?

"When will it be time," asked Mrs. Lecks, "for us to put on the life-preservers? When the water gets nearly to the seats?"

I answered that we should not wait any longer than that, but in my own mind I could not see any advantage in putting them on at all. Why should we wish to lengthen our lives by a few hours of helpless floating upon the ocean?

"Very good," said Mrs. Lecks: "I'll keep a watch on the water. One of them cans was filled with lobster, which would be more than likely to disagree with us, and I've throwed it out; but the other had baked beans in it, and the best thing we can do is to eat some of these right away. They are mighty nourishin', and will keep up strength as well as anythin'; and then, as you said there's a keg of water in the boat, we can all take a drink of that, and it'll make us feel like new creatur's. You'll have to take the beans in your hands, for we've got no spoons nor forks."

Mrs. Lecks and Mrs. Aleshine were each curled up out of reach of the water, the first in the stern, and the other on the aft thwart. The day was now beginning to break, and we could see about us very distinctly. Before reaching out her hands to receive her beans, Mrs. Aleshine washed them in the water in the boat, remarking at the same time that she might as well make use of it since it was there. Having then wiped her hands on some part of her apparel, they were filled with beans from the newspaper held by Mrs. Lecks, and these were passed over to me. I was very hungry; and when I had finished my beans, I agreed with my companions that although they would have been a great deal better if heated up with butter, pepper, and salt, they were very comforting as they were. One of the empty cans was now passed to me; and after having been asked by Mrs. Lecks to rinse it out very carefully, we all satisfied our taste from the water in the keg.

"Cold baked beans and lukewarm water ain't exactly company victuals," said Mrs. Aleshine, "but there's many a poor wretch would be glad to get 'em."

I could not imagine any poor wretch who would be glad of the food together with the attending circumstances; but I did not say so.

"The water is just one finger from the bottom of the seat," said Mrs. Lecks, who had been stooping over to measure, "and it's time to put on the life-preservers."

"Very good," said Mrs. Aleshine: "hand me mine."

Each of us now buckled on a life-preserver; and as I did so, I stood up upon a thwart and looked about me. It was quite light now, and I could see for a long distance over the surface of the ocean, which was gently rolling in wide, smooth swells. As we rose upon the summit of one of these I saw a dark spot upon the water, just on the edge of our near horizon. "Is that the steamer?" I thought; "and has she not yet sunk?"

At this there came to me a glimmering of courageous hope. If the steamer had remained afloat so long, it was probable that on account of water-tight compartments, or for some other reason, her sinking had reached its limit, and that if we could get back to her we might be saved. But alas, how were we to get back to her? This boat would sink long, long before I could row that distance.

However, I soon proclaimed the news to my companions, whereupon Mrs. Aleshine prepared to stand upon a thwart and see for herself. But Mrs. Lecks restrained her.

"Don't make things worse, Barb'ry Aleshine," said she, "by tumblin' overboard. If we've got to go into the water, let us do it decently and in order. If that's the ship, Mr. Craig, don't you suppose we can float ourselves to it in some way?"

I replied that by the help of a life-preserver a person who could swim might reach the ship.

"But neither of us can swim," said Mrs. Lecks; "for we've lived where the water was never more'n a foot deep,—except in time of freshets, when there's no swimmin' for man or beast. But if we see you swim perhaps we can follow, after a fashion. At any rate, we must do the best we can, and that's all there is to be done."

"The water now," remarked Mrs. Aleshine, "is so near to the bottom of my seat that I've got to stand up, tumble overboard or no."

"All right," remarked Mrs. Lecks: "we'd better all stand up, and let the boat sink under us. That will save our jumpin' overboard, or rollin' out any which way, which might be awkward."

"Goodness gracious me!" exclaimed Mrs. Aleshine. "You set the oysters creepin' over me again! First you talk of the ship sinkin' under us, and now it's the boat goin' to the bottom under our feet. Before any sinkin' 's to be done I'd ruther get out."

« Now, Barb'ry Aleshine,» said Mrs. Lecks, « stand up straight and don't talk so much. It'll be a great deal better to be let down gradual than to flop into the water all of a bunch.»

« Very well,» said Mrs. Aleshine. « It may be best to get used to it by degrees, but I must say I wish I was home.»

As for me, I would have much preferred to jump overboard at once, instead of waiting in this cold-blooded manner; but as my companions had so far preserved their presence of mind, I did not wish to do anything which might throw them into a panic. I believed there would be no danger from the suction caused by the sinking of a small boat like this; and if we took care not to entangle ourselves with it in any way, we might as well follow Mrs. Lecks's advice as not. So we all stood up, Mrs. Lecks in the stern, I in the bow, and Mrs. Aleshine on a thwart between us. The last did not appear to have quite room enough for a steady footing; but as she remarked, it did not matter very much, as the footing, broad or narrow, would not be there very long.

I am used to swimming, and have never hesitated to take a plunge into river or ocean; but I must admit that it was very trying to my nerves to stand up this way and wait for a boat to sink beneath me. How the two women were affected I do not know. They said nothing; but their faces indicated that something disagreeable was about to happen, and that the less that was said about it the better.

The boat had now sunk so much that the water was around Mrs. Aleshine's feet, her standing-place being rather lower than ours. I made myself certain that there were no ropes nor any other means of entanglement near my companions or myself, and then I waited. There seemed to be a good deal of buoyancy in the bow and stern of the boat, and it was a frightfully long time in sinking. The suspense became so utterly unendurable that I was tempted to put one foot on the edge of the boat, and by tipping it, put an end to this nerve-rack; but I refrained, for I probably should throw the women off their balance, when they might fall against some part of the boat and do themselves a hurt. I had just relinquished this intention, when two little waves seemed to rise one on each side of Mrs. Aleshine; and gently flowing over the side of the boat, they flooded her feet with water.

"Hold your breaths!" I shouted. And now I experienced a sensation which must have been very like that which comes to a condemned criminal at the first indication of the pulling of the drop. Then there was a horrible sinking, a gurgle, and a swash; and the ocean, over which I had been gazing, appeared to rise up and envelop me.

In a moment, however, my head was out of the water; and looking hastily about me, I saw close by the heads and shoulders of Mrs. Lecks and Mrs. Aleshine. The latter was vigorously winking her eyes and blowing from her mouth some sea-water that had got into it; but as soon as her eyes fell upon me she exclaimed, "That was ever so much more suddint than I thought it was goin' to be!"

"Are you both all right?"

"I suppose I am," said Mrs. Aleshine; "but I never thought that a person with a life-preserver on would go clean under the water."

"But since you've come up again, you ought to be satisfied," said Mrs. Lecks. "And now," she added, turning her face toward me, "which way ought we to try to swim? and have we got everythin' we want to take with us?"

"What we haven't got we can't get," remarked Mrs. Aleshine; "and as for swimmin', I expect I'm goin' to make a poor hand at it."

I had a hope, which was not quite strong enough to be a belief, that, supported by their life-preservers, the two women might paddle themselves along; and that by giving them in turn a helping hand, I might eventually get them to the steamer. There was a strong probability that I should not succeed, but I did not care to think of that.

I now swam in front of my companions, and endeavored to instruct them in the best method of propelling themselves with their arms and their hands. If they succeeded in this, I thought I would give them some further lessons in striking out with their feet. After watching me attentively, Mrs. Lecks did manage to move herself slowly through the smooth water; but poor Mrs. Aleshine could do nothing but splash.

"If there was anythin' to take hold of," she said to me, "I might get along; but I can't get any grip on the water, though you seem to do it well enough. Look there!" she added in a higher voice. "Isn't that an oar floatin' over there? If you can get that for me, I believe I can row myself much better than I can swim."

This seemed an odd idea; but I swam over to the floating oar, and brought it her. I was about to show her how she could best use it, but she declined my advice.

"If I do it at all," she said, "I must do it in my own way." And taking the oar in her strong hands, she began to ply it on the water, very much in the way in which she would handle a broom. At first she dipped the blade too deeply, but correcting this error, she soon began to paddle herself along at a slow but steady rate.

"Capital!" I cried. "You do that admirably!"

"Anybody who's swept as many rooms as I have," she said, "ought to be able to handle anythin' that can be used like a broom."

"Isn't there another oar?" cried Mrs. Lecks, who had now been left a little distance behind us. "If there is, I want one."

Looking about me, I soon discovered another floating oar, and brought it to Mrs. Lecks; who, after holding it in various positions, so as to get "the hang of it," as she said, soon began to use it with as much skill as that shown by her friend. If either of them had been obliged to use an oar in the ordinary way, I fear they would have had a bad time of it; but considering the implement in the light of a broom, its use immediately became familiar to them, and they got on remarkably well.

I now took a position a little in advance of my companions, and as I swam slowly they were easily able to keep up with me. Mrs. Aleshine, being so stout, floated much higher out of the water than either Mrs. Lecks or I, and this permitted her to use her oar with a great deal of freedom. Sometimes she would give such a vigorous brush to the water that she would turn herself almost entirely around; but after a little practice she learned to avoid undue efforts of this kind.

I was not positively sure that we were going in the right direction, for my position did not allow me to see very far over the water; but I remembered that when I was standing up in the boat and made my discovery, the sun was just about to rise in front of me, while the dark spot on the ocean lay to my left. Judging, therefore, from the present position of the sun, which was not very high, I concluded that we were moving toward the north, and therefore in the right direction. How far off the steamer might be, I had no idea, for I was not accustomed to judging distances at sea; but I believed that if we were careful of our strength, and if the ocean continued as smooth as it now was, we might eventually reach the vessel, provided she were yet afloat.

"After you are fairly in the water," said Mrs. Aleshine, as she swept along, although without the velocity which that phrase usually implies, "it isn't half so bad as I thought it would be. For one thing, it don't feel a bit salt, although I must say it tasted horribly that way when I first went into it."

"You didn't expect to find pickle-brine, did you?" said Mrs. Lecks. "Though if it was, I suppose we could float on it settin'."

"And as to bein' cold," said Mrs. Aleshine, "the part of me that's in is actually more comfortable than that which is out."

"There's one thing I would have been afraid of," said Mrs. Lecks, "if we hadn't made preparations for it, and that's sharks."

"Preparations!" I exclaimed. "How in the world did you prepare for sharks?"

"Easy enough," said Mrs. Lecks. "When we went down into our room to get ready to go away in the boats, we both put on black stockin's. I've read that sharks never bite colored people, although if they see a white man in the water they'll snap him up as quick as lightnin'; and black stockin's was the nearest we could come to it. You see, I thought as like as not we'd have some sort of an upset before we got through."

"It's a great comfort," remarked Mrs. Aleshine; "and I'm very glad you thought of it, Mrs. Lecks. After this I shall make it a rule: Black stockin's for sharks."

"I suppose in your case," said Mrs. Lecks, addressing me, "dark trousers will do as well."

To which I answered that I sincerely hoped they would.

"Another thing I'm thankful for," said Mrs. Aleshine, "is that I thought to put on a flannel skeert."

"And what's the good of it," said Mrs. Lecks, "when it's soppin' wet?"

"Flannel's flannel," replied her friend, "whether it's wet or dry; and if you'd had the rheumatism as much as I have, you'd know it."

To this Mrs. Lecks replied with a sniff, and asked me how soon I thought we would get sight of the ship; for if we were going the wrong way, and had to turn round and go back, it would certainly be very provoking.

I should have been happy indeed to be able to give a satisfactory answer to this question. Every time that we rose upon a swell I threw a rapid glance around the whole circle of the horizon; and at last, not a quarter of an hour after Mrs. Lecks's question, I was rejoiced to see, almost in the direction in which I supposed it ought to be, the dark spot which I had before discovered. I shouted the glad news, and as we rose again my companions strained their eyes in the direction to which I pointed. They both saw it, and were greatly satisfied.

« Now then,» said Mrs. Aleshine, « it seems as if there was somethin' to work for »; and she began to sweep her oar with great vigor.

« If you want to tire yourself out before you get there, Barb'ry Aleshine,» said Mrs. Lecks, « you'd better go on in that way. Now what I advise is, that we stop rowin' altogether and have somethin' to eat; for I'm sure we need it to keep up our strength.»

« Eat! » I cried. « What are you going to eat? Do you expect to catch fish? »

«And eat 'em raw?» said Mrs. Lecks. « I should think not. But do you suppose, Mr. Craig, that Mrs. Aleshine and me would go off and leave that ship without takin' somethin' to eat by the way? Let's all gether here in a bunch, and see what sort of a meal we can make. And now, Barb'ry Aleshine, if you lay your oar down there on the water, I recommend you to tie it to one of your bonnet-strings, or it'll be floatin' away, and you won't get it again.»

As she said this, Mrs. Lecks put her right hand down into the water and fumbled about, apparently in search of a pocket. I could not but smile, as I thought of the condition of food when for an hour or more it had been a couple of feet under the surface of the ocean; but my ideas on the subject were entirely changed when I saw Mrs. Lecks hold up in the air two German sausages, and shake the briny drops from their smooth and glittering surfaces.

« There's nothin',» she said, « like sausages for shipwreck and that kind o' thing. They're very sustainin'; and bein' covered with a tight skin, water can't get at 'em, no matter how you carry 'em. I wouldn't bring these out in the boat, because havin' the beans we might as well eat them. Have you a knife about you, Mr. Craig?»

I produced a dripping jack-knife; and after the open blade had been waved in the air to dry it a little, Mrs. Lecks proceeded to divide one of the sausages, handing the other to me to hold meanwhile.

«Now don't go eatin' sausages without bread, if you don't want 'em to give you dyspepsy,» said Mrs. Aleshine, who was tugging at a submarine pocket.

«I'm very much afraid your bread is all soaked,» said Mrs. Lecks.

To which her friend replied that that remained to be seen, and forthwith produced with a splash a glass preserve-jar with a metal top.

«I saw this nearly empty as I looked into the ship's pantry, and I stuffed into it all the soft biscuits it would hold. There was some sort of jam left at the bottom, so that the one who gets the last biscuit will have somethin' of a little spread on it. And now, Mrs. Lecks,» she continued triumphantly, as she unscrewed the top, «that rubber ring has kept 'em as dry as chips. I'm mighty glad of it, for I had trouble enough gettin' this jar into my pocket,— and gettin' it out, too, for that matter.»

Floating thus, with our hands and shoulders above the water, we made a very good meal from the sausages and soft biscuit.

«Barb'ry Aleshine,» said Mrs. Lecks, as her friend proceeded to cut the second sausage, «don't you lay that knife down when you've done with it, as if 't was an oar; for if you do it'll sink, as like as not, about six miles. I've read that the ocean is as deep as that in some places.»

«Goodness gracious me!» exclaimed Mrs. Aleshine, «I hope we are not over one of them deep spots.»

«There's no knowin',» said Mrs. Lecks; «but if it's more comfortin' to think it's shallerer, we'll make up our minds that way. Now then,» she continued, «we'll finish off this meal with a little somethin' to drink. I'm not given to takin' spirits; but I never travel without a little whisky, ready mixed with water, to take if it should be needed.»

So saying, she produced from one of her pockets a whisky flask tightly corked, and of its contents we each took a sip; Mrs. Aleshine remarking that leaving out being chilled or colicky, we were never likely to need it more than now.

Thus refreshed and strengthened, Mrs. Lecks and Mrs. Aleshine took up their oars, while I swam slightly in advance, as before. When, with occasional intermissions of rest, and a good deal of desultory conversation, we had swept and swam for about an hour, Mrs. Lecks suddenly exclaimed, « I can see that thing ever so much plainer now, and I don't believe it's a ship at all. To me it looks like bushes.»

« You're mighty long-sighted without your specs,» said Mrs. Aleshine, « and I'm not sure but what you're right.»

For ten minutes or more I had been puzzling over the shape of the dark spot, which was now nearly all the time in sight. Its peculiar form had filled me with a dreadful fear that it was the steamer, bottom upward; although I knew enough about nautical matters to have no good reason to suppose that this could be the case. I am not far-sighted; but when Mrs. Lecks suggested bushes, I gazed at the distant object with totally different ideas, and soon began to believe that it was not a ship, either right side up or wrong side up, but that it might be an island. This belief I proclaimed to my companions; and for some time we all worked with increased energy, in the desire to get near enough to make ourselves certain in regard to this point.

«As true as I'm standin' here,» said Mrs. Lecks, who, although she could not read without spectacles, had remarkably good sight at long range, « them is trees and bushes that I see before me, though they do seem to be growin' right out of the water.»

« There's an island under them; you may be sure of that!» I cried. «And isn't this ever so much better than a sinking ship?»

« I'm not so sure about that,» said Mrs. Aleshine. « I'm used to the ship, and as long as it didn't sink I'd prefer it. There's plenty to eat on board of it, and good beds to sleep on, which is more than can be expected on a little bushy place like that ahead of us. But then the ship might sink all of a suddint,—beds, victuals, and all.»

« Do you suppose that is the island the other boats went to?» asked Mrs. Lecks.

This question I had already asked of myself. I had been told that the island to which the captain intended to take his boats lay about thirty miles south of the point where we left the steamer. Now, I knew very well that we had not come thirty miles; and had reasons to believe, moreover, that the greater part of the progress we had made had been toward the north. It was not at all probable that the position of this island was unknown to our captain; and it must therefore have been considered by him as an unsuitable place for the landing of his passengers. There might be many reasons for this unsuitableness: the island might be totally barren and desolate; it might be the abode of unpleasant natives; and more important than anything else, it was in all probability a spot where steamers never touched.

But whatever its disadvantages, I was most wildly desirous to reach it; more so, I believe, than either of my companions. I do not mean that they were not sensible of their danger, and desirous to be freed from it; but they were women who had probably had a rough time of it during a great part of their lives, and on emerging from their little circle of rural experiences accepted with equanimity, and almost as a matter of course, the rough times which come to people in the great outside world.

«I do not believe,» I said, in answer to Mrs. Lecks, «that that is the island to which the captain would have taken us; but whatever it is, it is dry land, and we must get there as soon as we can.»

«That's true,» said Mrs. Aleshine, «for I'd like to have ground nearer to my feet than six miles; and if we don't find anythin' to eat and any place to sleep when we get there, it's no more than can be said of where we are now.»

«You're too particular, Barb'ry Aleshine,» said Mrs. Lecks, «about your comforts. If you find the ground too hard to sleep on when you get there, you can put on your life-preserver, and go to bed in the water.»

«Very good,» said Mrs. Aleshine; «and if these islands are made of coral, as I've heard they was, and if they're as full of small p'ints as some coral I've got at home, you'll be glad to take a berth by me, Mrs. Lecks.»

I counseled my companions to follow me as rapidly as possible, and we all pushed vigorously forward. When we had approached near enough to the island to see what sort of place it really was, we perceived that it was a low-lying spot, apparently covered with verdure, and surrounded, as far as we could see as we rose on the swells, by a rocky reef, against which a tolerably high surf was running. I knew enough of the formation of these coral islands to suppose that within this reef was a lagoon of smooth water, into which there were openings through the rocky barrier. It was necessary to try to find one of these; for it would be difficult and perhaps dangerous to attempt to land through the surf.

Before us we could see a continuous line of white-capped breakers; and so I led my little party to the right, hoping that we should soon see signs of an opening in the reef.

We swam and paddled, however, for a long time, and still the surf rolled menacingly on the rocks before us. We were now as close to the island as we could approach with safety; and I determined to circumnavigate it, if necessary, before I would attempt with these two women to land upon that jagged reef. At last we perceived, at no great distance before us, a spot where there seemed to be no breakers; and when we reached it we found, to our unutterable delight, that here was smooth water flowing through a wide opening in the reef. The rocks were piled up quite high, and the reef, at this point at least, was a wide one; for as we neared the opening we found that it narrowed very soon and made a turn to the left, so that from the outside we could not see into the lagoon.

I swam into this smooth water, followed close by Mrs. Lecks and Mrs. Aleshine,—who however soon became unable to use their oars, owing to the proximity of the rocks. Dropping these useful implements, they managed to paddle after me with their hands; and they were as much astonished as I was when, just after making the slight turn, we found stretched across the narrow passage a great iron bar about eight or ten inches above the water. A little farther on, and two or three feet above the water, another iron bar extended from one rocky wall to the other. Without uttering a word I examined the lower bar, and found one end of it fastened by means of a huge padlock to a great staple driven into the rock. The lock was securely wrapped in what appeared to be tarred canvas. A staple through an eyehole in the bar secured the other end of it to the rocks.

"These bars were put here," I exclaimed, "to keep out boats, whether at high or low water. You see they can only be thrown out of the way by taking off the padlocks."

"They won't keep us out," said Mrs. Lecks, "for we can duck under. I suppose whoever put 'em here didn't expect anybody to arrive on life-preservers."

ELIZABETH BARSTOW STODDARD

(1823–)

Elizabeth Barstow, the wife of Richard Henry Stoddard, was born in Massachusetts, May 6th, 1823. She was married to the poet in 1851; and a few years later began to write stories and poems so intense and individual, that though anonymous they were recognized at once as the work of a new writer. ‘The Morgesons’ appeared in 1862, ‘Two Men’ in 1865, and ‘Temple House’ in 1867, a new edition being issued in 1888.

In advance of her time by a generation, Mrs. Stoddard belongs to the school of Maeterlinck and Ibsen rather than to the romantic period of fiction of the day in which she wrote. Whether she records humble life in a New England village, as in ‘Two Men’; or the story of an ancestral mansion in an American seaport town, as in ‘Temple House’; or the history of a «queer» family, as in ‘The Morgesons,’— her work is metaphysical like Ibsen's. Her men and women reproduce types not infrequently found in forgotten New England towns. They are strong self-centred characters, in whom an active intellect and intense nervous energy, compressed by narrow surroundings, produce numberless idiosyncrasies. In their moral isolation, they are still grim Puritans in everything but creed. Mrs. Stoddard draws them with a wonderful comprehension of the hidden springs of their action. Like Ibsen, she exemplifies life and illustrates her dramatic force in breathless tragic episodes.

It is true, however, that before she is a dramatist, she is a psychologist: a sphinx sitting on the stony way to the temple, and looking with unquestioning eyes into life's problem. That method of suggestion which is our latest fashion in literature, Mrs. Stoddard used when it was not a fashion, but a form of reticence. There are descriptions in her novels cut with a chisel; others in which nature is used as a background to scenes of intense thought, in moments of outward stillness. She was a realist before the word had been defined. She dwells in shadows as grim as those of ‘Wuthering Heights,’ in an atmosphere so dense that we see the movements of her characters as through a thick glass screen; but each person, each scene, is touched with a gleam of poetic light.

It is as a poet, perhaps, that she has gained her highest fame; though no book of the time, according to the great English critic, Mr. Leslie Stephen, is more remarkable than her ‘Temple House.’ Mrs. Stoddard has been writing and publishing poems since her girlhood, but they were not collected until 1896. In them is reflected the spirit of her fiction, the tragic atmosphere with which her novels are surcharged. Burning with intensity, if a spirit so hopeless may be said to burn, these strange, reserved, yet passionately regretful lyrics have for their theme the pain of quiet endurance, the disappointment of an ardent fancy, and the sorrow of an unsatisfied heart. Those written in early youth might have been penned by Maeterlinck, — tragical, musical, introspective; Stoddard himself might have taught her the ringing, forcible strains in ‘The House by the Sea,’ or in ‘Xanthos’ and ‘Achilles,’ — poems in blank verse, sonorous, dignified, individual. The highest expression of her poetic gift is found perhaps in short poems, like ‘Mercedes,’ where passion, sullen, deep, and pitiless, veils itself in tropical beauty.

In both her poems and her novels is reflected her sense of the beauty and aloofness of nature; of the «dusty answers» to the clamors of impetuous human souls.

THE GREAT GALE

From ‘Temple House.’ Copyright 1888, by O. M. Dunham. Published by the Cassell Publishing Company

Mat Sutcliffe announced to Argus one morning that spring had come. The ice on the shores and inside the bay was giving way. And he asked Argus if gales were not to be looked for? They compared notes about the weather, and concluded to look for southerly storms.

The weather softened so that very day that Tempe threw aside her shawl, and Roxalana made the tour of all the rooms, and by way of a walk went up to the attic to look over the fields and bay. She remarked to Argus, on coming down, that she had never seen the White Flat so plainly: it appeared to be stretching across the harbor's mouth.

« The ice made it look so, probably,» he replied.

The snow around the house began to melt, and in the stillness they heard the water trickling everywhere.

« Soon,» said Roxalana, « the buds will begin to swell.»

At sunset the atmosphere was spongy and rotten. Masses of vapor rolled up from the south, extinguishing a pale brassy band of light in the west; and a strange wind rose in the upper air, and closed with night.

Early in the evening Argus shook the iron bars of the shutters on the harbor side, and fastened them; he foresaw the storm, and would have shut out its fury for Roxalana's sake, who appeared perturbed and melancholy, as if disasters at sea were threatened.

« The wind must be rising,» she said, holding up her hand: « I feel streams of air from everywhere. The candles flare; but I don't hear the surf.»

« You will hear it presently,» he replied.

« I don't care if it blows half the town down,» said Tempe.

« Don't spare the other half: let the whole go, and be damned, if you wish so,» he answered.

A tremendous hiss passed through the crevices of the outer doors, which was met by a roar in the chimney. An irruption of white flaky ashes followed and covered the hearth. Next, the roof and walls of the house were taken as a coign of vantage by the shrieking wind to hang out its viewless banners, which shivered, flapped, and tore to tatters in raging impotence.

« We must put out this fire, Argus,» said Roxalana, « or we shall be on fire inside the house.»

« Better put yourselves in bed: I will take care of the fire.»

Acting upon this suggestion, they left him alone. A short time afterwards he went out on the lawn. The dull thunder of the surf now broke so furiously on the bar that the ground beneath his feet reverberated.

« The bay is champing its jaws on that devilish White Flat, and any sail coming this way is lost.»

Looking overhead, he discovered in the milky darkness of the obscured moon deep vague rifts in the sky, like the chasm in Orion. The frenzied, overdriven spirits of the storm took refuge in the piling, tumbling folds of the clouds, which hovered over and fell into the abyss. While he stood there, the elms bowed from bole to topmost bough, and brushed his face as if they paid him homage. No sound came from the town side; he could not see a single light. Opposite the lawn, King's Hill reared its black summit; from thence, if he climbed, he could obtain a view of the wailing, howling bay, and — perchance of some vessel seeking harbor. He preferred to go back and shut himself up in the house.

Though the storm raged the next morning as storm had not raged for years, Argus remained in the green room, and pored over the book of plays, so well remembered by Virginia. About noon Mat Sutcliffe burst in, with his tarpaulin jammed over his head, and carrying an immense spy-glass in a canvas case. His tidings did not astonish Argus. A vessel putting into the bay the night before had dragged her anchors and struck on the White Flat; her flag was flying from the rigging, and there were men there: it being low water when she struck, her quarter-deck might afford temporary safety, provided the cold did not increase and freeze the crew to death.

« What is the town doing, Mat ? » asked Roxalana.

«A great many people are out doing nothing. They are on the wharves, on the top of King's Hill, the hair blowing off their heads; and I believe there's a gang along-shore somewhere,» he replied.

« No boat can live if put out,» said Argus. « How low down the bar did the vessel drive on ? »

«As near to Bass Headland as can be. If the wind would chop round, somebody might get out there.»

« So the sailors must drown,» cried Tempe, notwithstanding she had put her fingers in her ears, not to hear. « I'll shut myself up in the cellar till it is all over.»

« I thought,» continued Mat, looking hard at Argus, « it might be best to look at the shingle below here: the ice is about gone there. If we could start under the lee of Bass Headland, a boat might slant — »

Argus gave such a shrug and grimace that Mat suddenly stopped, and without another word abruptly left the room.

«Argus,» said Roxalana with great composure, « I shall not get you a mouthful of dinner to-day.»

« I trust you will consent to do your share in disposing of the poor corpses,» added Tempe sharply.

For reply, Argus rose, book in hand, opened the shutter of the window towards the quay, sat down by it, and went on with his comedy.

Tempe telegraphed to her mother her opinion that he was a beast of an uncle; and even Roxalana was moved to eye him with a mild, doubting severity.

But he was on the alert. When he heard drops of rain splash on the window ledge, he shut his fingers in his book, and looked into the fire. A shower came down, which was neither hail nor snow, but warm rain. He started up, stretched his arms like one who had long been cramped and weary, and sat down again with an indifferent air, and opened his book.

Roxalana came in from the kitchen, and said that the vane on the summer-house had veered slightly, and there was less noise from the wind.

« The gale is moderating, luckily.»

Something in his tone struck her. She raised her eyes to his, and he smiled ironically; it made her feel like asking his pardon.

« Can I have any dinner?» he asked.

« I think so: what shall it be?»

« Brandy and cigars.»

She disappeared.

Mat came in late in the afternoon, with as little ceremony as before, and said roughly to Argus, « You are wanted.»

« I won't go.»

« Captain, if we don't get across within twelve hours, every soul on board that vessel now will be in hell.»

« I supposed so.»

« She's bilged, and the White Flat begins to hug her. It's flood tide, and the waves must be washing the main deck: a few hours of that work will settle their hash.»

« What's doing with the life-boat?»

« The loons have tried to launch her; but there's something wrong, and they are trying to tinker her up. The will of folks is good enough, but they can't get out there,—that's the long and short on't. Bill Bayley swore he'd go out alone: his cock-boat swamped first thing, and they had to throw him a rope. He swore at the man who threw it,—at the boat, at the bay, the wreck, and the Almighty,—and then he cried. I never liked Bill so well.»

Mat spit into the fire furiously, and stumped round the room, a shoe on one foot and a boot on the other, his trousers settling over his hips in spite of his tight leather belt. He was growing frantic with excitement.

Argus laughed.

Mat made an energetic, beseeching motion towards the door; he would have put up his soul for sale for the sake of seeing Argus move with the intention he wished to inspire him with.

Argus turned back his sleeves, baring a snow-white wrist, and abstractedly felt his pulse and the muscles of his arms.

«Push ahead,» he said.

«Aye, aye, sir,» Mat shouted, turning very pale, and lurching towards the door.

«Stop: where is Roxalana?»

«Roxalana!» Mat shouted.

«What is it, Mat?» she answered, coming with a bottle.

«Yes; give us a dram, old girl,» continued Mat, utterly oblivious of the proprieties.

Argus laughed again, and asked for his mackintosh.

«Now then,» said Mat, having swallowed nearly a tumbler of brandy. Argus drank a little, and poured the rest of the bottle into a flask which he buttoned inside his coat. Tempe ran down to the door as they passed out, and Argus looking back called out:—

«Where is your crape veil, Tempe?»

«Where the courage of Kent is,—shut up in a bandbox,» she answered.

Roxalana, after gazing at her a moment, took her by the arm and dragged her into the green room.

«I believe,» she said, in a breathless undertone, «that you are possessed sometimes. Do you know that your uncle Argus may have gone for his shroud?»

«Was that why he inquired for the veil?»

«Could you choose no other moment to express your insensibility? Are you never to be anything but a child?»

«Mother, you must be crazy. You don't mean to say that you are going to protest against the Gates character,—as *I* represent it?»

Roxalana said no more, but went her way, feeling a painful excitement. She replenished the fires, hung kettles of water over them, collected blankets, cordials, and liquors, and then went to the kitchen to bake bread.

Twilight brought Mary Sutcliffe and her youngest boys. Dumping them in a corner of the kitchen as if they were sacks, and threatening them with a whipping if they moved, she rolled up her sleeves, and said that she thought the fathers of families had better stay at home, instead of risking themselves to save nobody knew who. Another boat had started since Mat had got under way, and she guessed the wreck would turn out to be a great cry and little wool: she did not think there would be much drowning this time. She wondered if the good folks in Kent had stirred themselves,—your religious Drakes, and your pious Brandes, and the rest of the church.

«Hold your tongue, Mary Sutcliffe,» ordered Tempe.

Then Mary whimpered, sobbed, and shrieked, declaring she had known all along she should never set eyes on Mat Sutcliffe again, who was well enough, considering what he was. And who else would have done what he was doing? and she gloried in his spunk. Drying her eyes with her fat hands, and shaking out her apron, she begged Roxalana to let her make the bread, and put the house to rights,—in case there were bodies coming in.

«Do, Mrs. Gates,» she pleaded. «I feel as strong as a giant to-night: I can wrestle with any amount of work.»

«If you will stop whining, Mary, I will accept your services: for to tell the truth, my head is not very clear just now; I am afraid I may spoil something.»

«Likely as not,» replied Mary: «go right into your sitting-room, sit down in your own chair, and you'll come to. It won't do for you, of all persons, to be upset, Mrs. Gates.»

Roxalana was quite ready to act upon Mary's suggestion. Death was near, and she felt it. After dark Mary began to walk about,—to the alley, and into the garden,—and report what she saw and heard. She ran down to the quay once, but came back scared and subdued at the sight of the angry solitude of the hoarse black sea, though she shook her impotent fist at it with indignation.

Roxalana felt a relief when Virginia Brande came down from the Forge, enveloped in a great cloak. She ventured to come by the path, the moment she heard that Captain Gates was making an attempt to get to the wreck. Her mother was so frightened and ill about it that Chloe and herself were obliged to make representations of the necessity for help in Kent from every hand and heart, before she consented to spare her. The Forge was deserted; her father had gone into town with the intention of offering a reward to the man who should first reach the wreck. Mary Sutcliffe, hearing this, cried:—

«And I suppose old Drake has offered as much again—hasn't he? Wouldn't I like to see Mr. Mat Sutcliffe, Esquire, handling that reward! I wish somebody would pay me for doing my duty. I'd put the money right into the contribution box at Mr. Brande's church. Oh yes, don't I see myself doing it!»

« Mary,» said Virginia, « you are talking nonsense. Please find some hairpins: mine must have dropped along the path.»

She removed the cloak-hood, and her hair tumbled in a mass down her shoulders: she could have hid herself in it.

« Goodness me!» cried Mary, « what splendid hair you've got! I never thought of it before. It is as black as the sky was just now on the quay.»

« Have you been to the quay, Mary?» asked Roxalana. « Do content yourself within doors. Where is Tempe?»

« I saw her kiting up-stairs just now. If she does not take care she'll keel over. It is as true as the gospel, that she has got a look in her face as new as a drop of cream would be to my cat.»

« Go and tell her that Virginia Brande is here, and she will come back.»

« I have always thought,» Mary replied, sticking a pin between her teeth, and allowing her eyes to take a reflective cast, « that it was as much as my life was worth to interfere with the way of a Gates; but I may change my mind. I'll go right after Tempe. O Lord-a-mercy, where do you think the two creatures are by this time? Sho! I know they will be along soon: it is not likely that Captain Argus Gates is going to be lost at sea, after he has given up going to sea; and — it would be foolish to suppose that Mat Sutcliffe will venture more than getting his boots soaked through.»

« Hairpins, please,» said Virginia.

Roxalana asked again, « Where is Tempe? Virginia Brande is here.»

Tempe fell into a fit of weeping and laughing the moment she saw Virginia, which was ended by a dead faint.

At last the boat was launched. Argus and Mat were afloat; so much was gained, and Argus thought the danger was preferable to the labor they had undergone in getting ready to risk their lives. The gloomy twilight, spreading from the east, dropped along the shore while they were dragging, pushing, and lifting the boat over the shingle, slush, and into the opposing sea.

« Hell bent be it! » said Mat, apostrophizing the waves, « if you say so. You are not alone, my friends. »

Mat seemed a part of the storm: his spirits were in a wild commotion; his clothes were torn and soggy with brine, and his hands were gashed and bloody. Argus had lost his cap, and broken his oar; he bound his head with Mat's woolen comforter, jammed his shoulder against the gunwale, and used the shortened oar with much composure. They did not make much headway: the boat was riding in all directions in the roar and foam of the sea; darkness pressed upon them; they were shut between the low-hanging sky and the shaking plain of water. In the midst of his silent, measured, energetic action, the thoughts of Argus drifted idly back to the trifling events of his life: a new and surprising charm was added to them, as bright, quiet, and warm as the golden dust of a summer sunset which touches everything as it vanishes.

Mat swore at the top of his voice that the wind was more nor'rard, and it would be an even chance about beating or not. Argus looked up and saw a circular break in the clouds, but said nothing.

« By the crucifix, » cried Mat, throwing himself forward, « I heard a yell. Where away are we? We are shoaling! »

Argus plunged his hands into the water from the stern-sheets: it felt like the wrinkled, hideous flesh of a monster, trying to creep away.

« We are under lee or there is a lull, for the water don't break, » he said. « If the moon was out, we should see the White Flat. I reckon we are on the tongue of the bar, and the vessel has struck below. Her hull must be sunk ten feet by this time, and her shrouds and spars are washed off: that yell will not be heard again. »

« Damn 'em, » said Mat savagely, « if they have drowned afore ever we could reach 'em, I'll take 'em dead, carry every mother's son of 'em to Kent, and bury 'em against their wills. »

The endless, steady-going rockers which slid under them from the bay outside tossed the boat no longer; the wind ceased to smite their faces, but tore overhead and ripped the clouds apart. The moon rolled out, and to the right they saw the ghastly, narrow crest of the White Flat. A mass of spume on their left which hissed madly proved what Argus had said,— that they were close to the end of the bar. Within the limits of the moonlight they saw nothing. In the bewildering, darkling illumination of the shattering water around them they were alone.

"If she's parted," continued Mat, "something might wash this way,—her gear at least. I'd like to catch a cabin door, or an article to that effect: it might come handy."

Argus did not hear him, for he was overboard. Missing him, Mat gave way for a moment; he felt the keel shove resisting sand, and remained passive, merely muttering, "I'm blasted, but she may drive."

Argus had seen, or thought he had, to the right of the boat, some object dipping in and out of the water and making toward them. He met it coming sideways, where the water was just below his breast; missed a hold of it, struggled for it, the shifting bottom impeding his footway; and the water battled against his head and arms, till, rearing itself up and stranding on the beach, he stumbled and fell beside it exhausted.

Raising himself on his hands and knees, he brought his face close to two persons—a man and a woman—fastened together by the embrace of death. The woman's face was upturned; its white oval, wet and glistening, shed a horrid light; the repeated blows of the murderous waves had tangled and spread her long hair over her. Tears of rage rushed into Argus's eyes when he saw where it had been torn from its roots. Her arms were round the man's head; her hands clutched his temples; his face was so tightly pressed into her bosom that Argus instinctively believed he was still alive in a stifled swoon. *She* was dead. Take her lover away from that breast of stone, Argus; let him not see those open lips,—no longer the crimson gates to the fiery hours of his enjoyment,—nor let him feel those poor bruised fingers clenching his brain; those delicate stems of the will are powerless to creep round his heart! May Satan of the remorseless deep alone know and remember the last hour of this woman's passion, despair, and sacrifice!

Argus rose to his feet, wondering why he saw so clearly; and possessed with an idea which was a mad one, perhaps, but which allied him, in greatness of soul, to the woman before him. He was still confused, and had forgotten where Mat and the boat were; but Mat had seen his dark figure rising against the sky, and was plowing through the sand with the intention of remonstrating with Argus on the impossibility of ever getting it off again. But when he came up behind him, there was something in his attitude — a familiar one — which imposed his respectful attention. Mat bent over the bodies silently, and touched them with his foot.

« She is dead ? » interrogated Argus.

« Never will be more so.»

« This man is still alive. Lift his head. I am out of breath. The wind is going down, and we can run back easy.»

« It may raly be called pleasant,» muttered Mat, on his knees in the sand. «*There, now I have got you, safe enough from her.* God! she put on shirt and trousers to jump overboard with him; swapping deaths, and getting nothing to boot. He is limber: give me the brandy and let's warm up the boy.»

« Here,» said Argus in a suppressed voice, « pour it down, quick. Have you a lashing ? I should like to put her out of his sight: one of the ballast stones will do. Help me to carry her to the other side of the bar: the deep water will cover her.»

Mat pretended to be too busy to hear.

« Crazier than ever,» he muttered. « I might have known his damned crankiness would bile out somewhere.»

Argus wrapped the poor girl in his mackintosh, and staggered towards the boat carrying her; there was no help against it, and Mat rose to his assistance. In a moment or two she was buried in the grave she had so terribly resisted.

The gale was nearly spent, and Mat ventured to hoist the sail. Argus tumbled the still insensible man into the boat by the head and heels, and they ran across the harbor, landing at the quay below the house. Mary was there before the boat was tied to a spile.

« How are you off for elbow-grease ? » cried Mat. « Put the lantern down, and jump in: here's a bundle for you to take up to the house. Cap'n and I are clean gone, I tell you. I've lost the rims of my ears, and expect to leave a few toes in these 'ere boots when I pull 'em off. Come, quick ! »

Without a word she lifted the man from the bottom of the boat, and with Mat's help, clambered up the wharf and took him into the house. Tempe ran shrieking when she saw him stretched on the floor before the fire in the green room. Roxalana sat rigid, nailed to her chair, incapable of motion at the sight; Virginia and Mary were collected. Mat adroitly peeled off a portion of his wet clothes, and told Mary to rub him like damnation. It was a long time before he gave sign of life. At the first choking breath Mat poured some brandy over his face and neck; he rose galvanically to a sitting posture, and fell back again, to all appearance dead. But Mat declared he was all right, and presently went out to change his wet clothes for dry ones. Virginia looked up at Argus, convinced herself that the man was saved.

"Take care of me, if you please," he said. "I want brandy, and a dry shirt. How are you, Roxalana?"

At the sound of his voice she turned in her chair. Mat returned with his arms full of clothes for Argus, and asked her if she would be good enough to step out with Virginia, and go to bed. There wasn't any use in praying now, for they were back. Not one of them thought of the unhappy crew, all lost except one who lay before them.

"That 'ere Virginia," said Mat, when she and Roxalana had gone, and he was watching the man's eyelids, "is as mealy a gal as I ever saw in my life. She's cool, and smooth, and soft. She beat Moll in rubbing. Hullo! his eyes are open. Look here, Spaniard, you belong to us. Drink this, my lad, and let me hold you up. So — all right, young un. Shut up, Gates: you are drunk, and have reason to be. I reckon you are black and blue from the bruises you got. I've had a pint of swipes myself, and feel inwardly correct. Hark ye,— he's off in a reglar, natural sleep, ain't he?"

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A SUMMER NIGHT

I feel the breath of the summer night,
Aromatic fire;
The trees, the vines, the flowers are astir
With tender desire.

The white moths flutter about the lamp,
Enamored with light;
And a thousand creatures softly sing
A song to the night!

But I am alone; and how can I sing
Praises to thee?
Come, Night! unveil the beautiful soul
That waiteth for me.

EL MANALO

In the still dark shade of the palace wall,
Where the peacocks strut,
Where the Queen may have heard my madrigal,
Together we sat.

My sombrero hid the fire in my eyes,
And shaded her own;
This serge cloak stifled her sweet little cries,
When I kissed her mouth.

The pale olive-trees on the distant plain,
The jagged blue rocks,
The vaporous sea — like mountain chain
Dropped into the night.

We saw the lights in the palace flare;
The musicians played;
The red guards slashed and sabred the stair
And cursed the old king.

In the long black shade of the palace wall,
We sat the night through;
Under my cloak — but I cannot tell all
The Queen may have seen!

MERCEDES

Under a sultry yellow sky
On the yellow sand I lie;
The crinkled vapors smite my brain,—
I smolder in a fiery pain.

Above the crags the condor flies,—
He knows where the red gold lies;
He knows where the diamonds shine:
If I knew, would she be mine?

Mercedes in her hammock swings;
In her court a palm-tree flings
Its slender shadow on the ground;
The fountain falls with silver sound.

Her lips are like this cactus cup;
With my hand I crush it up;
I tear its flaming leaves apart,—
Would that I could tear her heart.

Last night a man was at her gate,—
In the hedge I lay in wait;
I saw Mercedes meet him there,
By the fireflies in her hair.

I waited till the break of day,
Then I rose and stole away;
But I left my dagger in the gate;—
Now she knows her lover's fate!

NAMELESS PAIN

I should be happy with my lot:
A wife and mother,—is it not
Enough for me to be content?
What other blessing could be sent?

A quiet house, and homely ways,
That make each day like other days;
I only see Time's shadow now
Darken the hair on baby's brow.

No world's work ever comes to me,
No beggar brings his misery;
I have no power, no healing art,
With bruisèd soul or broken heart.

I read the poets of the age,—
'Tis lotus-eating in a cage;
I study art, but art is dead
To one who clamors to be fed

With milk from Nature's rugged breast,
Who longs for Labor's lusty rest.
O foolish wish! I still should pine
If any other lot were mine.

ON THE CAMPAGNA

Stop on the Appian Way,
In the Roman Campagna,—
Stop at my tomb,
The tomb of Cecilia Metella!
To-day as you see it
Alaric saw it, ages ago,
When he, with his pale-visaged Goths,
Sat at the gates of Rome,
Reading his Runic shield.
Odin! thy curse remains!

Beneath these battlements
My bones were stirred with Roman pride,
Though centuries before my Romans died:
Now my bones are dust; the Goths are dust.
The river-bed is dry where sleeps the king;
My tomb remains.
When Rome commanded the earth,
Great were the Metelli:
I was Metellus's wife;
I loved him,—and I died.
Then with slow patience built he this memorial:
Each century marks his love.

Pass by on the Appian Way
The tomb of Cecilia Metella.
Wild shepherds alone seek its shelter,
Wild buffaloes tramp at its base,
Deep in its desolation,
Deep as the shadow of Rome!

ON MY BED OF A WINTER NIGHT

On my bed of a winter night,
Deep in a sleep, and deep in a dream,
What care I for the wild wind's scream?
What to me is its crooked flight?

On the sea of a summer's day,
Wrapped in the folds of a snowy sail,

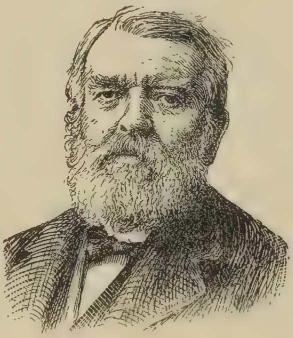
What care I for the fitful gale,
Now in earnest, and now in play?

What care I for the fitful wind,
That groans in a gorge, or sighs in a tree?
Groaning and sighing are nothing to me;
For I am a man of steadfast mind.

RICHARD HENRY STODDARD

(1825-)

The poems of Richard Henry Stoddard, one of America's truest lyrical poets, were collected and published in a complete edition in 1880. The 'Early Poems' form the first of the periods into which, for convenience's sake, the book is divided; the 'Songs of Summer' with 'The King's Bell' the second; the 'Songs of the East' the third; and 'Later Poems' the fourth. They represent the work of thirty years. In 1890 he published 'The Lion's Cub and Other Verses,' a book not unworthy of his maturity.



R. H. Stoddard

Stoddard's early verses, too good to be purely original, are perhaps the nearest approach made by any youthful poet to the tuneful phrases and overflowing melody of Keats. But the poet of twenty had lighted his fire with the divine torch. The song

> «You know the old Hidalgo,»

the serenade

> «But music has a golden key,»—

songs of the gay troubadour singing under the latticed window,—are true lyrics, showing those peculiar traits of poetic power which are recognizable through all the changes consequent upon nearly fifty years of study and development. These traits are a passionate love of beauty, affluence, virility, and imagination; and a minor but unusual quality, that of childlike unselfconsciousness. He propounds no questions, he seeks to solve no problems. He is a poet, not a metaphysician.

Stoddard learned to «find» his art, according to his own confession, in his early poems. 'The Songs of Summer' are made up of short poems in which his warm imagination gives life to the simplest themes. Among the best known of them are 'There are Gains for all Our Losses,' 'Two Brides,' 'Through the Night,' and the songs 'The Sky is a Drinking-Cup,' and 'Birds are Singing Round my Window.'

Beginning with a measure a little less regular than that of Keats, Stoddard departed gradually from the even ten-syllabled rhyme, and adopted freer movements for his varied themes. This is perceptible in —

«The young child Jesus had a garden
Full of roses rich and rare,»

a poem which might be inscribed under one of Francia's pictures.

Few men have sung with so pure a spontaneity, preserving at the same time the canons of art. There is infinite variety in ‹The Book of the East.› Its versifications are made from translations by many hands, and not translations at first hand. That love of beauty, that «sensuous love of earth» which passionately possessed him, led Stoddard to use in maturer years the language of the Orient, as in youth it had led him to echo ‹Endymion.› But through the caressing measures of the Persian, the ringing rhythm of the Tartar, the sensuous tenderness of the Arab songs, through the Chinese songs where he runs the gamut of sweetness, sentiment, homely naturalism, and savage passion,—through all these themes and quantities the poet keeps himself always within the limits of accurate and organic composition.

His narrative poems, scattered through all four volumes, owe much of their simplicity and strength to the vigor and purity of his prose. In ‹The Fisher and Charon,› in ‹Proserpine,› in ‹The King's Sentinel,› in ‹The Pearl of the Philippines,› and in ‹Wratislaw,› his imagination and his strength blending, find completest expression.

It was said of Browning that he was «a woman's man.» Stoddard is essentially «a man's man.» In his ‹Book of the East,›—poems which exhibit to the full his delicate sensuousness,—he has the Oriental view of woman, feeling her helplessness and her witchery. In his ‹Songs of the Mystic› he watches the passing of youth and love, the approach of age and sorrow, with all of the poet's, of the man's, regret; yet retains his strength and sweetness, his love of love and warfare, to the end. The ‹Later Poems› contain many of his noblest efforts,—poems that express the highest flights and largest freedom of his poetical genius.

Mr. Stoddard was born July 2d, 1825, at Hingham, Massachusetts. His father was a sea-captain, who died when his son was ten years old. It was doubtless owing to this parentage, and to his early influences and associations, that the poet's songs of the sea are so appreciative of its mystery and its charm. After his father's death he came with his mother to New York, where he received a common-school education, supplemented by independent study. He served for some time in the New York Dock Department, and spent seventeen years in the Custom House, in an employment dignified by the example of Hawthorne at Salem, and of Lamb at the East India House. During this time he did much scholarly prose work, generally as a literary essayist and critic.

SONG

From ‹The Poems of Richard Henry Stoddard.› Copyright 1880, by Charles Scribner's Sons

You know the old Hidalgo
(His box is next to ours)
Who threw the Prima Donna
The wreath of orange-flowers:
He owns the half of Aragon,
With mines beyond the main;
A very ancient nobleman
And gentleman of Spain.

They swear that I must wed him,
In spite of yea or nay,
Though uglier than the Scaramouch,
The spectre in the play;
But I will sooner die a maid
Than wear a gilded chain,
For all the ancient noblemen
And gentlemen of Spain!

A SERENADE

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The moon is muffled in a cloud
That folds the lover's star,
But still beneath thy balcony
I touch my soft guitar.

If thou art waking, Lady dear,
The fairest in the land,
Unbar thy wreathèd lattice now,
And wave thy snowy hand.

She hears me not, her spirit lies
In trances mute and deep;

But Music has a golden key
That opes the gate of Sleep.

Then let her sleep; and if I fail
To set her spirit free,
My song will mingle in her dream,
And she will dream of me.

THE YELLOW MOON

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The yellow Moon looks slantly down
Through seaward mists, upon the town;
And ghost-like there the moonshine falls
Between the dim and shadowy walls.

I see a crowd in every street,
But cannot hear their falling feet;
They float like clouds through shade and light,
And seem a portion of the Night.

The ships have lain for ages fled
Along the waters, dark and dead;
The dying waters wash no more
The long black line of spectral shore.

There is no life on land or sea,
Save in the quiet Moon and me;
Nor ours is true, but only seems,
Within some dead old World of Dreams.

THE SKY IS A DRINKING-CUP

Adapted from the Persian. From 'The Poems of Richard Henry Stoddard.' Copyright 1880, by Charles Scribner's Sons

The sky is a drinking-cup
That was overturned of old,
And it pours in the eyes of men
Its wine of airy gold.

We drink that wine all day,
Till the last drop is drained up,
And are lighted off to bed
By the jewels in the cup!

THE TWO BRIDES

From 'The Poems of Richard Henry Stoddard.' Copyright 1880, by Charles Scribner's Sons

I saw two maids at the kirk,
And both were fair and sweet:
One in her wedding robe,
And one in her winding-sheet.

The choristers sang the hymn,
The sacred rites were read;
And one for life to Life,
And one to Death, was wed.

They were borne to their bridal beds
In loveliness and bloom;
One in a merry castle,
And one in a solemn tomb.

One on the morrow woke
In a world of sin and pain;
But the other was happier far,
And never awoke again.

THE FLIGHT OF YOUTH

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There are gains for all our losses,
There are balms for all our pain;
But when youth, the dream, departs,
It takes something from our hearts,
And it never comes again.

We are stronger and are better,
Under manhood's sterner reign:
Still we feel that something sweet
Followed youth with flying feet,
And will never come again.

Something beautiful is vanished,
And we sigh for it in vain:
We behold it everywhere,
On the earth and in the air,
But it never comes again.

THE SEA

From ‹The Poems of Richard Henry Stoddard.› Copyright 1880, by Charles Scribner's Sons

You stooped and picked a red-lipped shell,
Beside the shining sea:
«This little shell, when I am gone,
Will whisper still of me.»
I kissed your hands, upon the sands,
For you were kind to me.

I hold the shell against my ear,
And hear its hollow roar:
It speaks to me about the sea,
But speaks of you no more.
I pace the sands, and wring my hands,
For you are kind no more.

THE SEA

From ‹The Poems of Richard Henry Stoddard.› Copyright 1880, by Charles Scribner's Sons

Thou pallid fisher maiden,
That standest by the shore,
Why dost thou watch the ocean,
And hearken to its roar?

It is some Danish sailor,
That sails the Spanish main;
Nor will thy roses redden
Till he returns again.

Thou simple fisher maiden,
He cares no more for thee:
He sleeps with the mermaidens,
The witches of the sea.

Thou shouldst not watch the ocean,
And hearken to its roar,
When bridal bells are ringing
In little kirks ashore.

Go, dress thee for thy bridal:
A stalwart man like me
Is worth a thousand sailors
Whose bones are in the sea.

ALONG THE GRASSY SLOPE I SIT

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Along the grassy slope I sit,
And dream of other years;
My heart is full of soft regrets,
My eyes of tender tears.

The wild bees hummed about the spot,
The sheep-bells tinkled far,
Last year when Alice sat with me,
Beneath the evening star.

The same sweet star is o'er me now,
Around the same soft hours;
But Alice molders in the dust
With all the last year's flowers.

I sit alone, and only hear
The wild bees on the steep,
And distant bells that seem to float
From out the folds of Sleep.

THE SHADOW OF THE HAND

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(Italy)

You were very charming, Madam,
In your silks and satins fine;
And you made your lovers drunken,
But it was not with your wine.
There were court-gallants in dozens,
There were princes of the land,
And they would have perished for you,
As they knelt and kissed your hand.
For they saw no stain upon it,
It was such a snowy hand.

But for me, I knew you better;
And while you were flaunting there,

I remembered some one lying
With the blood on his white hair.
He was pleading for you, Madam,
Where the shriven spirits stand;
But the Book of Life was darkened
By the shadow of a hand.
It was tracing your perdition,
For the blood upon your hand!

PAIN IN AUTUMN

From ‹The Poems of Richard Henry Stoddard.› Copyright 1880, by Charles Scribner's Sons

A DROWSY pain, a dull, dead pain
Preys on my heart, and clouds my brain;
And shadows brood above my dreams,
Like spectral mists o'er haunted streams.

There is no fire within the grate,
The room is cold and desolate,
And dampness on the window-panes
Foretells the equinoctial rains.
The stony road runs past the door,
Dry and dusty evermore;
Up and down the people go,
Shadowy figures, sad and slow,
And the strange houses lie below.

Across the road the dark elms wait,
Ranged in a row before the gate,
Giving their voices to the wind,
And their sorrows to my mind.
Behind the house the river flows,
Half unrest and half repose:
Ships lie below with mildewed sails,
Tattered in forgotten gales;
Along each hulk a whitish line,
The dashing of the ancient brine.
Beyond, the spaces of the sea,
Which old Ocean's portals be:
The land runs out its horns of sand,
And the sea comes in to meet the land.

Sky sinks to sea, sea swells to sky,
Till they meet, and mock the eye,
And where they meet the sand-hills lie;
No cattle in their pastures seen,
For the yellow grass was never green.
With a calm and solemn stare
They look to heaven in blank despair,
And heaven, with pity dumb the while,
Looks down again with a sickly smile.

The sky is gray, half dark, half bright,
Swimming in dim, uncertain light,
Something between the day and night.
And the winds blow, but soft and low,
Unheard, unheeded in their woe;
Like some sick heart, too near o'erthrown
To vent its grief by sigh or moan,
Some heart that breaks, like mine — alone.

And here I dwell, condemned to see,
And be, what all these phantoms be,
Within this realm of penal pain,
Beside the melancholy main:
The waste which lies, as legend saith,
Between the worlds of Life and Death;
A soul from Life to Death betrayed,
A shadow in the world of shade.

BIRDS

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Birds are singing round my window,
Tunes the sweetest ever heard;
And I hang my cage there daily,
But I never catch a bird.

So with thoughts my brain is peopled,
And they sing there all day long;
But they will not fold their pinions
In the little cage of Song!

THE DEAD

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I think about the dead by day,
I dream of them at night:
They seem to stand beside my chair,
Clad in the clothes they used to wear,
And by my bed in white.

The commonplaces of their lives,
The lightest words they said,
Revive in me, and give me pain,
And make me wish them back again,
Or wish that I were dead.

I would be kinder to them now,
Were they alive once more;
Would kiss their cheeks, and kiss their hair,
And love them, like the angels there,
Upon the silent shore.

THEODOR STORM

(1817–1888)

Theodor Storm is one of the masters of the German *novelle*. His range is somewhat limited, for he is intensely national, almost sectional. Born in Husum, a small town on the sea-coast of Schleswig-Holstein, he had the Northerner's deep love for home; and all his work is colored by this love. After passing through the gymnasium of his native town, he went to Lübeck to prepare for the university. Here his love of poetry was awakened; and Goethe, Eichendorf, and Heine exerted an influence upon him which he never outgrew. He studied law at Kiel and at Berlin, and settled down to a quiet practice at Husum. The revolutionary disturbances of 1848 drove him from his home, and led him to accept positions under the Prussian government; first at Potsdam, and then at Heiligenstadt in Southern Germany. During these latter years he acquired that intimate acquaintance with Southern manners and modes of thinking which he turned to artistic uses in some of his stories. He returned to Husum in 1864, where he held the position of *landvogt* until 1880. He then retired to his country home in Holstein; and some of his most delightful work was produced in his old age.

Theodor Storm

Storm led the most uneventful of lives: happy in his family and conscientious in his official duties. In his literary work there is very curiously an ever-returning undertone of sadness, of lost hopes, of disappointed lives. He began his literary career as lyric poet,—by 'Liederbuch Dreier Freunde' (Song-Book of Three Friends), a small volume published in 1843 in conjunction with Tycho and Theodor Mommsen. By their truth to nature and their simple pathos these poems promised to place Storm high among German lyric poets, had not his growing fame as story-teller led him to cultivate prose at the expense of poetry. His first great success was 'Immen-see,' published in 1850. Even to-day it is one of the most popular and best known of his works. It is a story of reminiscence,—an old man going back to his youth to live over again, in the twilight hour, the days of his young lost love. This harking back to bygone times runs more or less through all of Storm's work. It determines the form,—a tale told in the first person by an elderly speaker; and it colors the spirit, toning it down to the gray of sorrows outlived but not forgotten. Renunciation and resignation are the watchwords of most of his stories.

With his return home in 1864, a new and the most fruitful period of his work began, marked by a great advance in characterization and in firmness of touch; he is also more dramatic: 'In St. Jürgen' is an example. He next tried the artist novel, a favorite type with German writers. 'Psyche,' published in 1875, has been especially praised by German critics. Some of his strongest work was done in the so-called chronicle novels,—romantic tales with a historic background, delineating North German life in the seventeenth century. 'Aquis Submersis' is one of the best of these, and by some critics considered the finest he ever wrote. 'Pole Poppenspäler' (Paul the Puppet-Player), written in 1877 for the children's magazine Deutsche Jugend, is one of his most charming stories. He composed it with the utmost care, on the principle that only the best is good enough for children, and that one should not «write down» to them. He has also cultivated the Märchen: of these, 'Die Regentrude' (Rain-Gertrude) is a most happy example of the blending of the real with the fantastic.

After his retirement his country home became a Mecca for literary pilgrimages. He was a favorite of the German reading public, because of his poetical, dreamy sentiment, his simplicity, his love of home, and his finished workmanship. He knows how to create an atmosphere and to produce a mood; he is one of the great masters of the short story of character and sentiment.

AFTER YEARS

From 'Immen-see'

Once more years have fled. It is a warm spring afternoon; and a young man, with sunburnt and strongly marked features, strolls leisurely along a shady road leading down the side of a hill. His grave gray eyes seem watching attentively for some alteration in the monotonous features of the road, which is long in making its appearance. By-and-by a cart comes slowly up the hill. «Halloo, good friend,» cries the wanderer to the peasant trudging by its side, «does this road lead to Immen-see?»

«Straight on,» replies the man, touching his round hat.

«Is it far from here?»

«Your Honor's just there. You'll see the lake before you could half finish a pipe: the manor-house is close on to it.»

The peasant went his way, and the other quickened his pace under the trees. After a quarter of a mile their friendly shade ceased on the left hand; and the path lay along the ridge of a descent, wooded with ancient oaks, whose crests hardly reached the level on which the traveler stood. Beyond these a wide landscape was glowing in the sunlight. Far beneath him lay the lake, calm, dark-blue, almost encircled by green waving forests, which, opening on but one side, disclosed an extensive perspective, bounded in its turn by a blue mountain range. Exactly opposite, it seemed as if snow had been strown among the green foliage of the woods: this effect was caused by the fruit-trees, now in full blossom; and amidst them, crowning the bank of the lake, stood the whitewashed manor-house,— a substantial edifice covered with red tiles. A stork flew from the chimney and circled slowly over the water. «Immen-see!» cried the traveler. It almost seemed as if he had reached the end of his journey; for he stood several minutes perfectly motionless, gazing over the summits of the trees at his feet towards the opposite shore, where the reflection of the house lay gently quivering on the water. Then suddenly he continued his course.

The descent now became steep, so that the trees again shaded the path; but also shut out all view of the prospect beyond, of which a glimpse could only now and then be caught through their branches. Soon the ground again rose, and the woods were replaced by well-cultivated vineyards; on both sides of the road stood blossoming fruit-trees, among whose fragrant branches the bees were humming merrily and rifling the flowers. A stately man, clad in a brown coat, now advanced to meet our pedestrian; and when within a few paces he waved his cap in the air, and in a clear hearty voice joyfully exclaimed, «Welcome, brother Reinhardt! welcome to Immen-see!»

«God bless you, Eric! thanks for your kind welcome!» cried the other in answer.

Here the old friends met, and a hearty shaking of hands followed. «But is it really you?» said Eric after the first greeting, as he looked closely into the grave countenance of his old schoolfellow.

«Certainly it is I. And you are your old self too, Eric; only you look, if possible, even more cheerful than you always used to do.»

At these words a pleasant smile made Eric's simple features look even merrier than before. «Yes, brother Reinhardt,» said he, once more pressing his friend's hand; «since then I have drawn the great prize. But you know all about that.» Then, rubbing his hands and chuckling with inward satisfaction, he added, «That will be a surprise! She'd never expect him,—not him, to all eternity!»

«A surprise? To whom then?» demanded Reinhardt.

«To Elizabeth.»

«Elizabeth! You do not mean that you have not told her of my visit?»

«Not a word, brother Reinhardt! She's not expecting you, nor does mother either. I invited you quite privately, that the pleasure might be all the greater. You know how I enjoy carrying out my little plans sometimes.»

Reinhardt grew thoughtful; and as they approached the house, he with difficulty drew breath. On the left hand the vineyards were soon succeeded by a large kitchen-garden, stretching down to the water's edge. Meanwhile the stork had descended to *terra firma*, and was marching gravely among the vegetable beds. «Halloo!» cried Eric, clapping his hands: «is that long-legged Egyptian stealing my short pea-sticks again?» The bird rose slowly, and perched on the roof of a new building, which, almost covered by the branches of the peach and apricot trees trained against it, lay at the end of the kitchen garden. «That is the manufactory,» said Eric. «I had that added two years ago. The business premises were built by my father, of blessed memory; the dwelling-house dates from my grandfather's time. So each generation gets forward a little.»

As he spoke, they reached an open space, bounded on both sides by the business premises, and on the background by the manor-house, whose two wings were joined by a high garden wall; which did not, however, quite shut out all view of the rows of dark yew-trees within, and over which drooped here and there the clusters of the now flowering lilacs. Men with faces heated alike by toil and exposure came and went, and saluted the two friends; and for each Eric had some order or inquiry respecting his daily work. At length they reached the house. A cool and spacious hall received them, at the end of which they entered a somewhat darker side passage. Here Eric opened a door, and they passed into a large garden-room. The thick foliage which covered the windows had filled both sides of this apartment with a sort of green twilight; but between these the wide-open folding-doors at once admitted the full splendor of the spring sunshine, and revealed the charming view of a garden, full of circular flower-beds and dark shady alleys, and divided down the centre by a broad walk, beyond which appeared the lake and the forest on its opposite shore. As the two companions entered, a breeze laden with delicious perfume from the parterres was wafted towards them.

On the terrace, facing the garden, sat a slight, girlish figure. She rose, and advanced to meet the new-comers; but half-way paused and stared at the stranger, motionless as though rooted to the spot. He smiled, and held his hand towards her. « Reinhardt! » cried she, « Reinhardt! My God! is it you? It is long since we met.»

« Long indeed,» said he,— and could utter no more; for as he heard her voice, a sharp bodily pang shot through his heart; and when he looked at her, she stood before him, the same sweet tender form to whom years ago, he had bidden farewell in his native place.

Eric, his whole face beaming with delight, had remained standing at the door. « Well, Elizabeth,» said he, « what do you say to that? You didn't expect him,— not him, to all eternity! »

Elizabeth's eyes were turned with a look of sisterly affection towards him. « You are always so kind, Eric! » said she.

He took her small hand caressingly in his. «And now we have got him,» said he, « we will not let him go again in a hurry. He has been so long away, we must make him one of ourselves. He looks quite a stranger. Only see what a fine gentleman he has become! »

Elizabeth stole a shy glance at the well-remembered face.

« It is only the time that we have not seen each other,» said he.

At this moment her mother entered, a little key-basket jingling on her arm. « Mr. Werner! » exclaimed she, on perceiving Reinhardt; « a guest as welcome as unexpected! » And now the conversation became general. The ladies settled themselves to their needlework; and while Reinhardt partook of the refreshments provided for him, Eric lighted his pipe, and sat, puffing and discoursing, by his side. . . .

Some days after this, when evening was drawing on, the family were assembled, as usual at this hour, in the garden-room. The door stood open, and the sun had already sunk behind the forests beyond the lake.

At the request of the whole party, Reinhardt consented to read aloud some ballads which he had that afternoon received from a friend in the country. He went to his room, and returned, bringing a roll of papers, which seemed to consist of several clearly written but detached sheets of paper.

They seated themselves round the table, Elizabeth by Reinhardt's side. «We will take them as they come,» said he. «I have not yet had time to look them over.»

Elizabeth unrolled the manuscripts. «Some are set to music,» said she. «You must sing them, Reinhardt.»

The first he came to were some Tyrolese herdsman's songs, of which he now and then hummed the cheerful airs as he read. A general gayety began to pervade the little circle.

«Who can have composed these charming songs?» asked Elizabeth.

«Ah!» said Eric, «easy enough to guess, I should think! Journeymen tailors and hairdressers, and merry souls of that sort!»

«They never were composed,» observed Reinhardt: «they grow,—fall from the air, are borne on every breeze, like the gossamers, and are sung in thousands of spots at the same moment. Every circumstance of our own most personal actions or sufferings may be found described among these ballads. It is as though all had helped to write them.»

He took up another sheet. «I stood on the high mountain—»

«I know that!» cried Elizabeth. «You begin, and I will join in, Reinhardt!» And now they sang together that wondrous melody, which one can hardly believe to have been discovered by any merely human being; Elizabeth with her rather subdued contralto accompanying his deeper tones.

The mother sat meanwhile stitching industriously at her needlework; and Eric had folded his hands, and was listening with the most devout attention. They finished; and Reinhardt silently laid the paper aside. From the shore of the lake the chiming of the cattle bells was borne through the still evening air. Involuntarily they listened, and then in a clear boy's voice, the familiar sounds broke on their ear:—

«I stood on the high mountain,
And marked the vale beneath.»

Reinhardt smiled. «Do you not hear? So it is carried from mouth to mouth.»

«It is often sung about here,» said Elizabeth.

«Yes,» remarked Eric: «it is only Caspar the cowboy, driving home the cattle.»

They listened till the sounds had died away.

«Those are creation's echoes, and sleep in the forest depths,» said Reinhardt; «God alone knows who first awakened them.»

He drew out a fresh leaf.

It had already grown darker, and a crimson glow now bathed the distant woods which bounded their horizon. Reinhardt unrolled the paper. Elizabeth laid her hand on its other side, and looked over the lines with him. Reinhardt read:—

«Mother would not list to me:
The other's bride I was to be;
All I had learnt to cherish
Was from my heart to perish:
But that could never be.

«Mother well her work may rue:
Whom I fondly loved she knew;
What else had been so blameless
Is sinful now and shameless.
What shall I do?

«For all my joy and pride
I've now this grief to hide:
Ah, were those vows unsaid!
Ah, could I beg my bread
Far o'er yon brown hillside!»

While reading, Reinhardt had noticed a slight trembling of the paper; and as he uttered the last words, Elizabeth gently pushed back her chair and passed silently into the garden. Her mother's look followed her. Eric would have gone after her;

but her mother remarked, « Elizabeth is engaged in the garden," and nothing more passed.

Gradually the pall of evening descended deeper and deeper on lake and garden. The bats flew whirring past the open doors, through which the perfume of the flowers and shrubs entered with ever-increasing strength. From the water rose the croaking of the frogs; and while the moon shed her calm radiance over the whole scene, a nightingale under the window commenced her song, soon answered by another from a thicket in the garden. Reinhardt's gaze long rested on the spot where Elizabeth's graceful form had disappeared among the trees; then he rolled up his papers, and bowing to his companions, he passed through the house and down to the quiet water.

The silent forests threw their dark shadows far out over the lake, while the centre glistened in the pale moonlight. As he passed, a slight breeze shivered among the trees; but it was not wind,—it was but the breath of the summer night. Reinhardt strolled along the shore; and presently, at about a stone's-throw from the water's edge, he perceived a white water-lily. All at once the wish seized him to examine it more closely; and throwing off his clothes, he sprang into the water. The bottom was level. Sharp stones and plants wounded his feet, and still it never became deep enough for swimming. Suddenly the ground ceased from beneath him, the water closed over his head, and it was some time before he again rose to the surface. Now he struggled with hand and foot; and swam round in circles until he could find out where he had entered the lake. Soon he again saw the lily. She lay lonely among her broad, shining leaves. He swam slowly out, now and then raising his arms out of the water, while the falling drops glittered in the moonlight. Still it seemed as though the distance between himself and the flower would never lessen: only when he looked towards the shore its outline grew ever more and more indistinct. He would not, however, be baffled, and swimming boldly forward, he came at length so close to the object of his pursuit that he could clearly distinguish its silvery leaves; but at the same moment he felt himself caught in a network of its strong and slippery roots, which, rising from the earth, had entwined themselves round his naked limbs. The unknown waters stretched black around him; close behind he heard the spring of a fish; suddenly so strong a thrill of horror came over him in the strange element, that violently tearing himself free from the tangled plants, he swam in breathless haste to the shore. Here he once more looked back over the lake, where, beautiful and distant as ever, the lily yet floated upon the surface of the dark deep. He dressed, and returned slowly to the house; where, on entering, he found Eric and his mother-in-law busied with the preparations for a short journey on business matters which was to take place the following day.

«Why, where have you been so late at night?» cried the lady.

«I?» replied he: «I wished to pay a visit to the water-lily; but I could not manage it.»

«Who would ever think of such a thing?» said Eric. «What the deuce had you to do with the lily?»

«I knew her well in former days,—a long time ago,» answered Reinhardt.

The following day Reinhardt and Elizabeth wandered together on the farther shore of the lake; now through the wood, and now on the steep and high banks by the water-side. Eric had begged Elizabeth during his and her mother's absence to show their visitor all the most beautiful views of the neighborhood; and especially those from the farther shore, which commanded the house itself. Thus they rambled from one lovely spot to another, until at length Elizabeth became tired, and seated herself in the shade of some overhanging branches. Reinhardt stood opposite to her, leaning against the trunk of a tree. All at once, deep in the forest, he heard the cry of the cuckoo; and suddenly it struck him that all this had happened just so once before.

«Shall we gather strawberries?» asked he, with a bitter smile.

«It is not the strawberry season,» she replied.

«It will soon be here, however.»

Elizabeth shook her head in silence. She rose, and they continued their stroll. Often and often did his earnest gaze rest on her as she walked by his side,—she moved so gracefully, almost as though borne along by her light, floating drapery. Frequently he involuntarily remained a step behind, that he might the better observe her; and thus proceeding, they arrived at a wide, open heath, from which there was an extensive prospect over the surrounding country. Reinhardt stooped, and gathered something from among the plants which covered the ground. When he again looked up, his whole face bore an expression of passionate sorrow. « Do you know this flower? » demanded he.

She looked at him inquiringly. « It is a heath: I have often found them in the woods. »

« I have an old book at home, » continued he, « in which formerly I used to write all sorts of rhymes and songs,—though it is very long now since I did so. Between its leaves there lies another heath-blossom, though it is but a withered one. Do you remember who gave it me? »

She bowed her head without reply; but her downcast eyes rested fixedly on the plant which he held in his hand. So they stood a long time; and as she again raised her eyes to his, he saw that they were full of tears.

« Elizabeth, » said he, « behind yonder blue mountains lies our youth. Alas! what traces of it remain to us? »

Neither spoke further. In silence they again descended to the lake. The air was sultry and heavy; lowering clouds began to gather in the west. « There will be a storm, » said Elizabeth, quickening her steps. Reinhardt nodded silently, and both walked rapidly along the shore till they reached their boat.

As Reinhardt steered across, his look turned constantly on his companion; but no answering glance met his. With eyes fixed on the far distance, Elizabeth sat opposite to him, and allowed her hand to lie on the edge of the little skiff. Gradually his gaze sunk, and rested on it; and in a moment this slight and wasted hand betrayed all that her face had striven so well to conceal. On it the secret grief which will so frequently show itself in a beautiful woman-hand that lies all night on a sickened heart, had left its unmistakable traces; but as Elizabeth felt his eyes resting on her hand, she allowed it to glide slowly overboard into the water.

On arriving at home, they found a knife-grinder's cart posted in front of the house. A man with long and shaggy black locks stood busily turning the wheel and humming a gipsy air, while a dog, harnessed to his little vehicle, lay growling beside him on the ground. In the hall stood a ragged girl, with disfigured though once beautiful features, who stretched her hand towards Elizabeth, imploring charity. Reinhardt felt in his pocket; but Elizabeth was too quick for him, and hastily pouring the whole contents of her purse into the beggar's hand, she turned abruptly away. Reinhardt heard her smothered sobs as she passed up the stairs.

His first impulse was to follow her, but instantly recollecting himself, he remained behind. The girl still stood motionless in the hall, the money just given her in her hand.

«What do you want?» asked Reinhardt.

She started violently. «I want nothing more,» said she. Then turning her head and fixing on him her piercing gaze, she retreated slowly towards the door. A cry, a name, burst from his lips; but she heard it not. With bowed head, and arms folded on her breast, she crossed the court-yard below; while in his ear there sounded the long-forgotten and ominous words,—

«Death, death will o'ertake me,
Friendless,—alone.»

For a few moments the very power of breathing seemed suspended; then he too turned, and sought the solitude of his own chamber.

He seated himself, and tried to study: but he could not collect his scattered thoughts; and after wasting an hour in a fruitless effort to fix his attention, he went down to the general sitting-room. No one was there,—only the cool green twilight. On Elizabeth's work-table lay a red ribbon she had worn the previous day. He took it in his hand; but its very touch gave him pain, and he laid it down on its old resting-place. He could not rest. He went down to the lake, and unmooring the boat, he steered across, and once more went over every spot that he had visited so shortly before with Elizabeth. When he again returned to the house it was dark, and in the court-yard he met the coachman taking the carriage-horses to graze; the travelers were just returned. As he entered the hall, he heard Eric pacing up and down the garden-room. Reinhardt could not go to him. A moment he paused irresolute; then he softly mounted the stairs leading to his own room. Here he threw himself into an armchair at the window. He tried to persuade himself that he was listening to the nightingale which was already singing among the yew-trees beneath him; but he only heard the wild throbbing of his own heart. Below in the house all were going to rest. The night passed away; but he felt it not. For hours he sat thus. At length he rose, and lay down in the open window. The night-dew trickled between the leaves; the nightingale had left off singing. Gradually towards the east the deep blue of the leaves was broken by a pale yellow flush; a fresh breeze sprang up and played on Reinhardt's burning forehead; the first lark sprang rejoicing in the air. Reinhardt turned quickly from the window, and went to the table. He felt for a pencil, with which he traced a few lines on a loose sheet of paper. This done, he took his hat and stick, and leaving the note on his desk, he carefully opened the door and descended into the hall. The gray dawn still rested in every corner: the great cat stretched herself out on the straw mat, and rubbed herself against the hand which he unconsciously held towards her. In the garden, however, the sparrows were already twittering among the branches, and proclaimed to every one that the night was past. Suddenly he heard a door open above. Some one came down the stairs, and as he looked up, Elizabeth stood before him. She laid her hand on his arm; she moved her lips, but he caught no sound. «Thou wilt never come back,» said she at length. «I know it. Do not deceive me. Thou wilt never come back.»

«Never!» said he. She let her hand fall, and said no more. He crossed the hall to the door, and there he once more turned towards her. She stood motionless on the same spot, and gazed after him with dead, glazing eyes. He made one step forward, and stretched out his arms; then violently he tore himself away, and went out. Without lay the world in the fresh morning light. The dewdrops hanging in the spiders' webs sparkled in the first rays of the sun. He looked not behind. Quickly he hurried forward; and as he left that quiet home farther and farther behind, there rose before him the wide, wide world.

Translation of H. Clark.

WILLIAM WETMORE STORY

(1819–1896)

William Wetmore Story made himself accomplished in two arts, like Blake or Rossetti. As a sculptor he was distinguished, and he was a graceful writer of both prose and verse. His statues of Edward Everett, George Peabody, Francis Scott Key, Lowell, Bryant, Theodore Parker, or of such ideal or historical subjects as Cleopatra, Medea, and The African Spirit, gave him wide reputation. His published writings are of a varied nature, ranging from legal books to love lyrics and odes of occasion. He was one of those cultured Americans who by long residence abroad become cosmopolitan in spirit, and reflect their environment in their work.

William Wetmore Story's father was Judge Joseph Story, the noted jurist, whose life the son wrote. William was born in Salem, Massachusetts, February 19th, 1819; and after being graduated from Harvard in 1838, studied law, was admitted to the bar, and published several legal works. But the desire to follow an art was strong in him; and in 1848 he went to Rome, became a sculptor, wrote many books, and resided at the Italian capital the remainder of his life, a conspicuous member of the American colony. He died there in 1896.

W. W. Story

As early as 1842 Story was editing and publishing law reports; and two years later appeared his Phi Beta Kappa poem at Harvard. His first book of ‹Poems› dates from 1847; half a dozen volumes of verse were printed during a period of well-nigh half a century,—the final volume being ‹A Poet's Portfolio› (1894), a volume of mingled prose and verse in dialogue form, continuing the earlier ‹He and She: A Poet's Portfolio› (1883), and containing clever social verse and pungent prose comment on life. Perhaps his most picturesque and sympathetic prose is to be found in ‹Roba di Roma: or Walks and Talks about Rome› (1862), to which a sequel was ‹The Castle of St. Angelo and the Evil Eye.› Other books of essays are ‹Conversations in a Studio' (1890), and 'Excursions in Arts and Letters' (1891),—polished, vigorous, often suggestive in thought and happy in expression. Story's sympathies are broad, and he is sensitive to the finer issues of life and thought. In his mature poems he is the humanist and apostle of culture.

A favorite verse form with him was the dramatic monologue made famous by Browning, and many of his lyrics and narratives show the influence of the Italy of art and literature. The most worthy of his poetry is that gathered in the two volumes entitled 'Poems,' published in 1886, and embodying several books previously issued.

THE GHETTO IN ROME

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But first let us take a glimpse of the Ghetto. Its very name—derived from the Talmud Ghet, and signifying segregation and disjunction—is opprobrious; and fitly describes the home of a people cut off from the Christian world, and banned as infamous. Stepping out from the Piazza di Pianto, we plunge at once down a narrow street into the midst of the common class of Jews. The air reeks with the peculiar frowzy smell of old woolen clothes, modified with occasional streaks of strata of garlic; while above all triumphs the foul human odor of a crowded and unclean population. The street is a succession of miserable houses, and every door opens into a dark shop. Each of these is wide open; and within and without, sprawling on the pavement, sitting on benches and stools, standing in the street, blocking up the passages, and leaning out of the upper windows, are swarms of Jews,—fat and lean, handsome and hideous, old and young,—as thick as ants around an ant-hill. The shop doors are draped with old clothes, and second-hand *roba* of every description. Old military suits of furbished shabbiness, faded silken court dresses of a past century with worn embroidery, napless and forlorn dress-coats with shining seams and flabby skirts, waistcoats of dirty damask, legs of velvet breeches,—in a word, all the cast-off riffraff of centuries that have "fallen from their high estate," are dangling everywhere overhead. Most of the men are lounging about and leaning against the lintels of the doors, or packed upon benches ranged in front of the shops. The children are rolling round in the dirt, and playing with cabbage ends and stalks, and engaged in numerous and not over-clean occupations. The greater part of the women, however, are plying the weapon of their tribe, with which they have won a world-wide reputation,—the needle,—and, bent closely over their work, are busy in renewing old garments and hiding rents and holes with its skillful web-work. Everybody is on the lookout for customers; and as you pass down the street, you are subject to a constant fusillade of, « Pst, Pst,» from all sides. The women beckon you, and proffer their wares. At times they even seize the skirts of your coat in their eagerness to tempt you to a bargain. The men come solemnly up, and whisper confidentially in your ear, begging to know what you seek.

Is there anything you can possibly want? If so, do not be abashed by the shabbiness of the shop, but enter, and ask even for the richest thing. You will find it, if you have patience. But once in the trap, the manner of the seller changes: he dallies with you as a spider with a fly, as a cat with a mouse. Nothing is to be seen but folded cloths on regular shelves—all is hidden out of sight. At first, and reluctantly, he produces a common, shabby enough article. « Oh no, that will never do,—too common.» Then gradually he draws forth a better specimen. «Not good enough? why, a prince might be glad to buy it!» Finally, when he has wearied you out, and you turn to go, he understands it is some superb brocade embroidered in gold, some gorgeous *portière* worked in satin, some rich tapestry with Scripture stories, that you want; and with a sigh he opens a cupboard and draws it forth. A strange combination of inconsistent and opposite feelings has prevented him from exhibiting it before. He is divided between a desire to keep it and a longing to sell it. He wishes, if possible, to eat his cake and have it too; and the poor ass in the fable between the two bundles of hay was not in a worse quandary. At last, the article you seek makes its appearance. It is indeed splendid, but you must not admit it. It may be the dress the Princess d'Este wore centuries ago,—faded, but splendid still; or the lace of Alexander VI. the Borgia; or an ancient altar cloth with sacramental spots; or a throne carpet of one of the popes. Do you really wish to buy it, you must nerve yourself to fight. He begins at the zenith, you at the nadir; and gradually, by dint of extravagant laudation on his part, and corresponding depreciation on yours, you approach each other. But the distance is too great,—the bargain is impossible. You turn and go away. He runs after you when he sees that you are not practicing a feint, and offers it for less; but still the price is too high, and he in turn leaves you. You pass along the street. With a mysterious and confidential air, another of the tribe approaches you. He walks by your side. Was it a gold brocade you wanted? He also has one like that which you have seen, only in better condition. Would your Signoria do him the favor to look at it? You yield to his unctuous persuasion, and enter his shop; but what is your astonishment when, after a delusive show of things you do not want, the identical article for which you have been bargaining is again produced in this new shop, and asserted stoutly, and with a faint pretense of indignation, to be quite another piece! This game is sometimes repeated three or four times. Wherever you enter, your old friend, Monsieur Tonson like, makes its appearance; and you are lucky if you obtain it at least for twice its value, though you only pay a twentieth part of the price originally asked.

All the faces you see in the Ghetto are unmistakably Hebraic, but very few are of the pure type. Generally it is only the disagreeable characteristics that remain: the thick peculiar lips, the narrow eyes set close together, and the nose thin at the junction with the eyebrows, and bulbous at the end. Centuries of degradation have for the most part imbruted the physiognomy, and all of them have a greasy and anointed look. Here and there you will see a beautiful black-eyed child, with a wonderful mass of rich tendril-like curls, rolling about in the dirt; or a patriarchal-looking old Abraham, with a full beard, and the pure Israelite nose hooked over the mustache, and cut up backward in the nostrils. Hagars, too, are sometimes to be seen; and even stately Rebeccas at rarer intervals stride across the narrow street, with a proud, disdainful look, above their station; but old Sarahs abound, —fat, scolding, and repulsive,—who fill to the extreme edge the wide chair on which they sit, while they rest their spuddy hands on their knees, and shake all over like jelly when they laugh. Almost all the faces are however of the short, greasy, bulbous type, and not of the long, thin, hook-nosed class. No impurity of breed and caste has sufficed to eradicate from them the Jewish characteristics.

As it is with the faces, so it is with the names. The pure Hebrew names have in great measure disappeared, or been inter-married with Italian surnames. These surnames are for the most part taken from some Italian city, or borrowed from some stately Italian house, with a pure Jewish prefix; as for instance, Isaac Volterra, Moses Gonzaga, Jacob Ponticorvo. So also their speech is Roman, and their accent thick and Jewish. It is seldom that one hears them speak in their original Hebrew tongue, though they all understand it, and employ it in their religious services.

The place and the people are in perfect keeping. The Ghetto is the high carnival of old clothes, the May-fair of rags. It is the great receptacle into which the common sewers of thievery and robbery empty. If a silver salver, a gold watch, a sparkling jewel, be missed unaccountably, it will surely run down into the Ghetto. Your old umbrella, your cloak that was stolen from the hall, the lace handkerchief with your initials embroidered in one corner, your snuff-box that the Emperor of Russia presented you, — there lurk in secret holes, and turn up again after months or years of seclusion. In this *columbarium* your lost inanimate friends are buried, but not without resurrection.

Crammed together, layer above layer, like herrings in a barrel, the Jews of Rome are packed into the narrow confines of the Ghetto. Three of the modern palaces of Rome would more than cover the whole Jewish quarter; yet within this restricted space are crowded no less than four thousand persons. Every inch has its occupant; every closet is tenanted. And this seems the more extraordinary in spacious and thinly populated Rome, where houses go a-begging for tenants, and where, in the vast deserted halls and chambers of many a palace, the unbrushed cobwebs of years hang from decaying walls and ceilings. With the utmost economy of room, there is scarcely space enough to secure privacy and individuality; and herded together like a huge family, they live in their sty.

THE KING OF THE BEGGARS

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DIRECTLY above the Piazza di Spagna, and opposite to the Via de' Condotti, rise the double towers of the Trinità de' Monti. The ascent to them is over one hundred and thirty-five steps, planned with considerable skill, so as to mask the steepness of the Pincian, and forming the chief feature of the Piazza. Various landings and dividing walls break up their monotony; and a red-granite obelisk, found in the gardens of Sallust, crowns the upper terrace in front of the church. All day long these steps are flooded with sunshine, in which, stretched at length, or gathered in picturesque groups, models of every age and both sexes bask away the hours when they are free from employment in the studios. Here in a rusty old coat, and long white beard and hair, is the « Padre Eterno »; so called from his constantly standing as model for the First Person of the Trinity in religious pictures. Here is the ferocious bandit, with his thick black beard and conical hat; now off duty, and sitting with his legs wide apart, munching in alternate bites an onion which he holds in one hand, and a lump of bread which he holds in the other. Here is the *contadina*, who spends her studio life in praying at a shrine with upcast eyes, or lifting to the Virgin her little sick child, or carrying a perpetual copper vase to the fountain, or receiving imaginary bouquets at a Barmecide carnival. Here is the invariable pilgrim, with his scallop-shell, who has been journeying to St. Peter's and reposing by the way near aqueducts or broken columns so long that the memory of man runneth not to the contrary; and who is now fast asleep on his back, with his hat pulled over his eyes. When strangers come along, the little ones run up and thrust out their hands for baiocchi; and so pretty are they with their large, black, lustrous eyes, and their quaint, gay dresses, that a new-comer always finds something in his pocket for them. Sometimes a group of artists passing by will pause and steadily examine one of these models, turn him about, pose him, point out his defects and excellences, give him a baiocco, and pass on. It is, in fact, a models' exchange.

All this is on the lower steps, close to the Piazza di Spagna; but as one ascends to the last platform, before reaching the upper piazza in front of the Trinità de' Monti, a curious squat figure, with two withered and crumpled legs, spread out at right angles and clothed in long blue stockings, comes shuffling along on his knees and hands, which are protected by clogs. As it approaches, it turns suddenly up from its quadrupedal position; takes off its hat; shows a broad, stout, legless torso, with a vigorous chest and a ruddy face, as of a person who has come half-way up from below the steps through a trap-door, and with a smile whose breadth is equaled only by the cunning which lurks round the corners of the eyes, says, in the blandest and most patronizing tones, with a rising inflection, « Buon giorno, signore! Oggi fa bel tempo,» or « fa cattivo tempo,» as the case may be. This is no less a person than Beppo, King of the Beggars, and Baron of the Scale di Spagna. He is better known to travelers than the Belvedere Torso of Hercules at the Vatican; and has all the advantage over that wonderful work, of having an admirable head and a good digestion. Hans Christian Andersen has celebrated him in 'The Improvisatore,' and unfairly attributed to him an infamous character and life; but this account is purely fictitious, and is neither *vero* nor *ben trovato.* Beppo, like other distinguished personages, is not without a history. The Romans say of him, « Era un signore in paese suo » — « He was a gentleman in his own country »; and this belief is borne out by a certain courtesy and style in his bearing which would not shame the first gentleman in the land. He was undoubtedly of a good family in the provinces, and came to Rome while yet young to seek his fortune. His crippled condition cut him off from any active employment, and he adopted the profession of a mendicant as being the most lucrative and requiring the least exertion. Remembering Belisarius, he probably thought it not beneath his own dignity to ask for an obolus. Should he be above doing what a great general had done? However this may be, he certainly became a mendicant, after changing his name; and steadily pursuing this profession for more than a quarter of a century, by dint of his fair words, his bland smiles, and his constant « Fa buon tempo,» and « Fa cattivo tempo,» — which, together with his withered legs, were his sole stock in starting, — he has finally amassed a very respectable little fortune. He is now about fifty-five years of age; has a wife and several children; and a few years ago, on the marriage of a daughter to a very respectable tradesman, he was able to give her what was considered in Rome a very respectable dowry. The other day, a friend of mine met a tradesman of his acquaintance running up the Spanish steps.

« Where are you going in such haste? » he inquired.

« To my banker.»

« To your banker? But what banker is there above the steps? »

« Only Beppo,» was the grave answer. « I want sixty scudi, and he can lend them to me without difficulty.»

« Really? »

"Of course. *Come vi pare?*" said the other, as he went on to his banker.

Beppo hires his bank — which is the upper platform of the steps — of the government, at a small rent per annum; and woe to any poor devil of his profession who dares to invade his premises! Hither, every day at about noon, he comes mounted on his donkey and accompanied by his valet, a little boy, who, though not lame exactly, wears a couple of crutches as a sort of livery; and as soon as twilight begins to thicken and the sun is gone, he closes his bank (it is purely a bank of deposit), crawls up the steps, mounts a stone post, and there majestically waits for his valet to bring the donkey. But he no more solicits deposits. His day is done; his bank is closed; and from his post he looks around, with a patronizing superiority, upon the poorer members of his profession,— who are soliciting with small success the various passers-by,— as a king smiles down upon his subjects. The donkey being brought, he shuffles on to its crupper, and makes a joyous and triumphant passage down through the streets of the city to his home. The bland business smile is gone. The wheedling subserviency of the day is over. The cunning eye opens largely. He is calm, dignified, and self-possessed. He mentions no more the state of the weather. "What's Hecuba to him," at this free moment of his return? It is the large style in which all this is done that convinces me that Beppo was a "signor in paese suo." He has a bank, and so had Prince Torlonia and Sir Francis Baring. But what of that? he is a gentleman still. The robber knights and barons demanded toll of those who passed their castles, with violence and threats, and at the bloody point of their swords. Whoso passes Beppo's castle is prayed in courtesy to leave a remembrance, and receives the blandest bow and thanks in return. Shall we then say the former are nobles and gentlemen, the other is a miserable beggar? Is it worse to ask than to seize? Is it meaner to thank than to threaten? If he who is supported by the public is a beggar, our kings are beggars, our pensions are charity. Did not the Princess Royal hold out her hand the other day to the House of Commons? and does any one think the worse of her for it? We are all, in measure, beggars; but Beppo, in the large style of kings and robber-barons, asks for his baiocco, and like the merchant-princes, keeps his bank. I see dukes and noble guards in shining helmets, spurs, and gigantic boots, ride daily through the streets on horseback, and hurry to their palaces; but Beppo, erectly mounted on his donkey, in his short jacket (for he disdains the tailored skirts of a fashionable coat, though at times over his broad shoulders a great blue cloak is grandly thrown, after the manner of the ancient emperors), is far more impressive, far more princely, as he slowly and majestically moves at nightfall towards his august abode. The shadows close around him as he passes along; salutations greet him from the damp shops; and darkness at last swallows up for a time the great square torso of the "King of the Beggars."

Such is Beppo as he appears on the public 'change. His private life is involved somewhat in obscurity; but glimpses have been had of him which indicate a grand spirit of hospitality, and condescension not unworthy of the best days of his ancestors, the barons of the Middle Ages. Innominato, a short time since, was passing late at night along the district of the Monti, when his attention was attracted by an unusual noise and merry-making in one of its mean little *osterie* or *bettole*. The door was ajar; and peeping in, he beheld a gallant company of roisterers of the same profession as Beppo, with porters, and gentlemen celebrated for lifting in other ways. They were gathered round a table, drinking merrily; and mounted in the centre of it, with his withered legs crooked under him, sat Baron Beppo, the high-priest of the festive rites. It was his banquet; and he had been strictly Scriptural in his invitations to all classes from the street. He was the Amphitryon who defrayed the cost of the wine, and acknowledged with a smile and a cheerful word the toasts of his guests; and when Innominato saw him, he was as "glorious" as Tam O'Shanter. He was not under the table, simply because he was on it; and he had not lost his equilibrium, solely because he rested upon so broad a base. Planted like an oak, his legs figuring the roots, there he sat, while the jolly band of beggars and rascals were "rousing the night-owl with a catch," and the blood of the vine was freely flowing in their cups. The conversation was very idiomatic and gay, if not aristocratic, and Beppo's tongue wagged with the best. It was a most cheering spectacle. The old barons used to sit above the salt, but Baron Beppo sat higher yet,— or rather, he reminded one of classic days, as, mounted there like a Bacchic Torso, he presided over the noisy rout of Silenus.

Beppo has, however, fallen lately into disgrace. His breakfast had perhaps disagreed with him, perhaps he had "roused the night-owl» too late on the previous night, and perhaps his nerves were irritated by a bad «scirocco»; but certain it is that one unfortunate morning an English lady to whom he applied for «qualche cosa» made some jocosely intended answer, to the effect that he was as rich as she, and alluded, it is said, to the dowry he had given his daughter; whereupon it became suddenly «cattivo giorno» with Beppo, and he suffered himself to threaten her, and even, as some accounts go, to throw stones; and the lady having reported him to the authorities, Beppo went into forced retirement for a time. I was made aware of this one day by finding his bank occupied by a new figure and face. Astonished at the audacity of this interloper, I stopped and said, «And Beppo, where is *he?*» The jolly beggar then informed me, in a very high and rather exulting voice (I am sorry to say), beginning with a sharp and prolonged eh—e-e-e-h, that the police had laid violent hands on Beppo, because he had maltreated an English lady, and that he ought to have known better, but «come si fa»; and that for the present he was at San Michele.

Beppo having repented, and it is to be hoped amended, during his sojourn in that holy hospice, has now again made his appearance in the world. But during his absence the government has passed a new and salutary law, by which beggars are forbidden publicly to practice their profession, except upon the steps of the churches. There they may sit and extend their hand, and ask charity from those who are going to their prayers; but they may no longer annoy the public, and especially strangers in the street. Beppo, therefore, keeps no more his bank on the steps of the Piazza di Spagna; but has removed it to those of the church of St. Agostino, where, at least for the present, he is open to the «receipt of custom.»

The words of the previous sentence are now, alas! no longer true. Since they were written and printed last, Beppo has passed away from among the living to join the great company, among which Lazarus is not the least. Vainly the eye of the stranger will seek him on the steps of the Piazza di Spagna, or on those of St. Agostino. The familiar figure has gone. The places which have known him will know him no more; and of the large and noble company of mendicants at Rome, there is not one left who could fitly wear the mantle that has fallen from his shoulders.

SPRING IN ROME

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Spring has come. The nightingales already begin to bubble into song under the Ludovisi ilexes and in the Barberini Gardens. Daisies have snowed all over the Campagna, periwinkles star the grass, crocuses and anemones impurple the spaces between the rows of springing grain along the still brown slopes. At every turn in the streets basketfuls of sweet-scented Parma violets are offered you by little girls and boys; and at the corner of the Condotti and Corso is a splendid show of camellias, set into beds of double violets, and sold for a song. Now and then one meets huge baskets filled with these delicious violets on their way to the confectioners and caffès, where they will be made into sirup; for the Italians are very fond of this *bibita*, and prize it not only for its flavor, but for its medicinal qualities. Violets seem to rain over the villas in spring; acres are purple with them, and the air all around is sweet with their fragrance. Every day scores of carriages are driving about the Borghese grounds, which are open to the public: and hundreds of children are running about, plucking flowers and playing on the lovely slopes and in the shadows of the noble trees; while their parents stroll at a distance and wait for them in the shady avenues. There too you will see the young priests of the various seminaries, with their robes tucked up, playing at ball, and amusing themselves at various sports. . . . If one drives out at any of the gates he will see that spring is come. The hedges are putting forth their leaves, the almond-trees are in full blossom, and in the vineyards the *contadini* are setting cane-poles, and trimming the vines to run upon them. Here and there along the slopes the rude antique plow, dragged heavily along by great gray oxen, turns up the rich loam, that needs only to be tickled to laugh out in flowers and grain. Here and there, the smoke of distant bonfires, burning heaps of useless stubble, shows against the dreamy purple hills like the pillar of cloud that led the Israelites. One smells the sharp odor of these fires everywhere, and hears them crackle in the fields:—

«Atque levem stipulam crepitantibus urere flammis.»

(And stubble easily burned with crackling flames.)

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CLEOPATRA

Dedicated to J. L. M.

Here, Charmian, take my bracelets,—
They bar with a purple stain
My arms; turn over my pillows,—
They are hot where I have lain;
Open the lattice wider,
A gauze on my bosom throw,
And let me inhale the odors
That over the garden blow.

I dreamed I was with my Antony,
And in his arms I lay;
Ah, me! the vision has vanished—
The music has died away.
The flame and the perfume have perished,
As this spiced aromatic pastille
That wound the blue smoke of its odor
Is now but an ashy hill.

Scatter upon me rose-leaves,—
They cool me after my sleep;
And with sandal odors fan me
Till into my veins they creep;
Reach down the lute, and play me
A melancholy tune,
To rhyme with the dream that has vanished,
And the slumbering afternoon.

There, drowsing in golden sunlight,
Loiters the slow smooth Nile
Through slender papyri, that cover
The wary crocodile.
The lotus lolls on the water,
And opens its heart of gold,
And over its broad leaf-pavement
Never a ripple is rolled.
The twilight breeze is too lazy
Those feathery palms to wave,

And yon little cloud is as motionless
As a stone above a grave.

Ah, me! this lifeless nature
Oppresses my heart and brain!
Oh! for a storm and thunder—
For lightning and wild fierce rain!
Fling down that lute—I hate it!
Take rather his buckler and sword,
And crash them and clash them together
Till this sleeping world is stirred.

Hark! to my Indian beauty,—
My cockatoo, creamy white,
With roses under his feathers,—
That flashes across the light.
Look! listen! as backward and forward
To his hoop of gold he clings,
How he trembles, with crest uplifted,
And shrieks as he madly swings!
O cockatoo, shriek for Antony!
Cry, «Come, my love, come home!»
Shriek, «Antony! Antony! Antony!»
Till he hears you even in Rome.

There—leave me, and take from my chamber
That stupid little gazelle,
With its bright black eyes so meaningless,
And its silly tinkling bell!
Take him,—my nerves he vexes,
The thing without blood or brain,—
Or by the body of Isis,
I'll snap his thin neck in twain!

Leave me to gaze at the landscape
Mistily stretching away,
Where the afternoon's opaline tremors
O'er the mountains quivering play;
Till the fiercer splendor of sunset
Pours from the west its fire,
And melted, as in a crucible,
Their earthly forms expire;
And the bald blear skull of the desert
With glowing mountains is crowned,
That burning like molten jewels
Circle its temples round.

I will lie and dream of the past time,
   Æons of thought away,
And through the jungle of memory
   Loosen my fancy to play;
When, a smooth and velvety tiger,
   Ribbed with yellow and black,
Supple and cushion-footed,
   I wandered where never the track
Of a human creature had rustled
   The silence of mighty woods,
And, fierce in a tyrannous freedom,
   I knew but the law of my moods.
The elephant, trumpeting, started
   When he heard my footstep near,
And the spotted giraffes fled wildly
   In a yellow cloud of fear.
I sucked in the noontide splendor,
   Quivering along the glade,
Or yawning, panting, and dreaming,
   Basked in the tamarisk shade,
Till I heard my wild mate roaring,
   As the shadows of night came on
To brood in the trees' thick branches,
   And the shadow of sleep was gone;
Then I roused, and roared in answer,
   And unsheathed from my cushioned feet
My curving claws, and stretched me,
   And wandered my mate to greet.
We toyed in the amber moonlight,
   Upon the warm flat sand,
And struck at each other our massive arms,—
   How powerful he was and grand!
His yellow eyes flashed fiercely
   As he crouched and gazed at me,
And his quivering tail, like a serpent,
   Twitched, curving nervously.
Then like a storm he seized me,
   With a wild triumphant cry,
And we met, as two clouds in heaven
   When the thunders before them fly.
We grappled and struggled together,
   For his love like his rage was rude;
And his teeth in the swelling folds of my neck
   At times, in our play, drew blood.

Often another suitor—
   For I was flexile and fair—
Fought for me in the moonlight,
   While I lay couching there,
Till his blood was drained by the desert;
   And, ruffled with triumph and power,
He licked me and lay beside me
   To breathe him a vast half-hour.
Then down to the fountain we loitered,
   Where the antelopes came to drink;
Like a bolt we sprang upon them,
   Ere they had time to shrink;
We drank their blood and crushed them,
   And tore them limb from limb,
And the hungriest lion doubted
   Ere he disputed with him.
That was a life to live for!
   Not this weak human life,
With its frivolous bloodless passions,
   Its poor and petty strife!

Come to my arms, my hero:
   The shadows of twilight grow,
And the tiger's ancient fierceness
   In my veins begins to flow.
Come not cringing to sue me!
   Take me with triumph and power,
As a warrior storms a fortress!
   I will not shrink or cower.
Come as you came in the desert,
   Ere we were women and men,
When the tiger passions were in us,
   And love as you loved me then!

THE CHIFFONIER

I am a poor Chiffonier!
   I seek what others cast away!
   In refuse-heaps the world throws by,
Despised of man, my trade I ply;
And oft I rake them o'er and o'er,
   And fragments broken, stained, and torn,

I gather up, and make my store
   Of things that dogs and beggars scorn.
      I am the poor Chiffonier!

You see me in the dead of night
Peering along with pick and light,
And while the world in darkness sleeps,
Waking to rake its refuse-heaps:
I scare the dogs that round them prowl,
   And light amid the rubbish throw:
For precious things are hid by foul,
   Where least we heed and least we know.
      I am the poor Chiffonier!

No wretched and rejected pile,
No tainted mound of offal vile,
No drain or gutter I despise,
For there may lie the richest prize.
And oft amid the litter thrown,
   A silver coin — a golden ring —
Which holdeth still its precious stone,
   Some happy chance to me may bring.
      I am the poor Chiffonier!

These tattered rags, so soiled and frayed,
Were in a loom of wonder made,
And beautiful and free from shame
When from the master's hand they came.
The reckless world that threw them off
   Now heeds them only to despise;
Yet, ah! despite its jeers and scoff,
   What virtue still within them lies!
      I am the poor Chiffonier!

Yes! all these shreds so spoiled and torn,
These ruined rags you pass in scorn,
This refuse by the highway tost,
I seek that they may not be lost;
And, cleansed from filth that on them lies,
   And purified and purged from stain,
Renewed in beauty they shall rise
   To wear a spotless form again.
      I am the poor Chiffonier!

HARRIET BEECHER STOWE.

HARRIET BEECHER STOWE

(1811–1896)

BY GEORGE S. MERRIAM

Harriet Beecher Stowe shared the general conditions of inheritance and nurture which bred the strongest group of thinkers and authors that America has produced. It was the peculiarity of early New England to combine an intense interest in the supreme questions of human destiny, regarded as the basis of the personal life, with the closest application to industrial and practical affairs. Calvinism stimulated thought on religious problems; and austere conditions of soil and climate enforced on the sturdy English stock the practice of industry, thrift, and shrewdness. For two centuries the narrowness of the dogmatic creed, and the awfulness of its sanctions, checked any free or original exploit of the intellect. Then came in a great enlargement of conditions, and a fresh stimulus. With the birth of the nation, brains and hands began to stretch out from their provincial cradle toward continental expansion. The rise of national questions; the impulse from Europe, stirred to its foundation by the French Revolution, and giving birth to new literatures; the outburst of the protest against Calvinism, which had been secretly growing for generations; a new ardor in the churches for missions and reforms; an advance in material comfort which widened opportunity and did not yet enervate,—those were among the influences which enriched and mellowed the soil in which hardy shoots had been growing, and out of which now flowered a brilliant little company of thinkers, poets, and story-tellers.

Mrs. Stowe was the daughter of Lyman Beecher, the foremost orthodox minister of his time; a man of sturdy, aggressive, exuberant nature, the father of a notable family of sons and daughters. His biography is one of the richest portraitures of New England life in the first half of the century. It shows how the sensitive and thoughtful child grew up in an atmosphere of theological discussion, which stimulated the mind and by turns satisfied and distressed the heart, while her observation and sense of humor found rich material. She was largely endowed with imagination, with sensibility, with the mystic's temper. She became the wife of a theological professor with scanty means; and the tenderness of motherly experience was mixed with the pressing cares of the household. By a removal to the West she gained knowledge of more various society and institutions, and then came back to the quiet of a Maine village, to ponder in her heart all she had seen and heard and felt.

The interest of the North in the slave system of the South was especially due to a little company of strenuous agitators, who were instant in season and out of season in denouncing slavery as the sum of all villainies. The violence of tone which generally characterized the Abolitionists, and their readiness to denounce all men and all institutions that did not fully agree with them, limited the influence due to their purity and heroism. The conservatism of commerce, the timidity of politicians, above all, the remoteness of the whole matter from the personal knowledge of the Northern people, long restrained the mass of the community from any very wide or active interest in the subject. Mrs. Stowe's sympathy had been profoundly touched by the tales of wrong and suffering that had come to her ears from escaped slaves while she lived in Cincinnati. She had pondered the whole question of slavery,— with a woman's heart, a poet's imagination, and a mind schooled by company with masculine and logical thinkers. Then the political interests of the whole country were focused upon the slavery question, by the great Congressional debate on the Compromise measures in 1850. Conspicuous in that legislation was the Fugitive Slave Act, making elaborate provision for the rendition of fugitive slaves from their Northern refuge. This law, and the scenes incident to its enforcement, brought the reality of slavery home to the Northern people closer than ever before, while it also implicated them more directly in the support of the system. But inertia and timidity still held back the mass of politicians, churches, and the general community, from effective action or energetic protest. Then this woman in her busy home in the quiet village, shedding tears at midnight over the sorrows of slave wives and mothers, found her imagination possessed by the scenes of a slave's story. It was transferred to paper almost automatically. Then other scenes linked themselves together,— scenes of pathos, of humor, of racy conversation, of dramatic action, of anguish, and of rapture. The whole story was born and grew,— an inspiration, a creation, mysterious and beautiful as the growth of a human life. It was given to the public, and it took captive the heart of America and of the world. Its literary success, measured by an enumeration of editions, translations, copies sold, was vast almost beyond comparison. But it won a mightier success; for probably beyond any other single influence, it planted in the men and women of the North a deep and passionate hostility to human slavery. The whole course of events moved together: the political forces were marshaled on the question whether slavery should be extended or restricted; new parties rose; and finally the two principles — of the maintenance of the Union and the abolition of slavery — were established at the cost of a terrible war. It would hardly be a figure of speech to say that the Northern army in that war — or the force which made the heart of that army — had been nurtured in boyhood and youth on 'Uncle Tom's Cabin,' and carried the book in their hearts.

The book was written as a protest against an institution; and now that the institution is gone the book remains with a deep permanent interest. It is an intensely human story. The temporary and local color is but the incident of a portrayal of human joys and sorrows, sufferings and victories, which appealed to readers in far-away lands, and can hardly fail to appeal in far-away years.

One of the most admirable and effective qualities of 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' is its wholly generous and sympathetic spirit toward the master class. The condemnation is all for the system, and for the opportunities and incitements it affords to the baser elements which exist in mankind at large. The master and mistress supply some of the most charming characters of the book, as the noble Mrs. Shelby and the fascinating St. Clare.

The key-note of the book is humanity. Its sub-title is 'Life among the Lowly.' It is in close accord with the great philanthropic movement of the age. Further, it is deeply religious. Its appeal is not to creed or authority, but to the spirit of Christ. It is the Christian faith that brings master and slave together: it is the figure of the Crucified One that to poor Tom's darkest hour brings a peace and strength in which he can calmly face torture and death. It was largely to this religious quality that the book owed its effectiveness. It rebuked that Pharisaic Christianity which had justified slavery with Biblical precedent, or had passed by the slave on the other side, while absorbed in ecclesiastical trifles; while its essential piety won multitudes of churchmen who had resented the fierce assaults of the Abolitionists on the churches and the prevalent forms of Christianity.

'Uncle Tom's Cabin' went on its way and did its work; and Mrs. Stowe, raised to sudden fame and to easier circumstances, but no whit spoiled or unsteadied, produced as her next serious work another antislavery novel, 'Dred.' It was less an inspiration than its predecessor, and more a deliberate construction; and was judged to be inferior in power. Yet it was a very strong book, both in human interest and in effective attack upon the slave system. In logical sequence to the simple story of the earlier book, it went on to portray the treatment of slavery on its own ground by the church, the law, and the would-be reformer. It showed how its essential evils were supported by statute and by judicial interpretation. It pictured the ways of the clerical politician. It depicted the attempt of a high-minded slaveholder to elevate his servants and purify the system, and his defeat by mob violence and by statute law. These were trenchant attacks on the system they were aimed at. But the more abiding charm of the book is in its lifelike picturing of men and women; and especially in «life among the lowly.» Best of all, perhaps, are «Old Tiff,» a counterpart of the «Uncle Remus» whom the present generation knows and loves; and Milly, the slave «mammy,»—the type which of all the negroes Mrs. Stowe portrays best, and perhaps the finest type of character which slavery produced. The Dred who gives name to the book is a negro runaway and insurgent,—half insane, half inspired,—pouring upon his oppressors the denunciations and threatenings of Hebrew prophecy. The effect upon the reader is fantastic and unreal. But the strain of terror and foreboding seems in the retrospect like a vague, awful prophecy of the war-cloud which was so soon to break.

Now, in the prime of her power, Mrs. Stowe turned back to the field which she knew best; which indeed was the very home of her heart and experience, and which she had essayed in her first slight sketches. ‹The Minister's Wooing› is a prose idyl and epic of New England, in that phase of its history which was richest and most attractive for the literary artist. It is a somewhat romantic and idealized picture, for Mrs. Stowe was a poet at heart; but the ground-lines are truthful, both the heroic and the homely figures are genuine and unmistakable in their reality, and the book throughout is racy of the soil from which it sprung. It gives us Yankeeland in its prime and at its best. A later phase and a grimmer aspect are described by Rose Terry Cooke; while Miss Wilkins's sketches are taken from a period of dismal decadence.

But ‹The Minister's Wooing› has its deepest interest not in its local character, but in the working of the human heart and mind hard beset by the problems of the universe. The motive of her anti-slavery novels is to depict a social institution; but in this book Mrs. Stowe has revealed from within the drama of a human soul in its supreme exigency. It is individual and yet typical. The Calvinistic theology—which is only an intensified form of the theology inherited by all the Protestant churches from the Middle Ages—was brought closely home to the lives and thoughts of the people, in a society of which the Sunday and the sermon were the central and dominating feature. The creed thus realized and applied bore strangely mingled fruit, according to the individual nature and development,—of heroism, rapture, exasperation, or despair. In the early century, Unitarianism broke out in open revolt; while Orthodoxy rallied to the defense, yet at the same time modified its own theories with a rapidity of which it was unconscious. Lyman Beecher was a foremost champion against the Unitarians, yet he was counted among his brethren an innovator and sometimes a heretic. In his biography and in the lives of his children—notably in Henry Ward and in

Harriet—may be traced the transformation, which without open break has replaced a harsh by a mild religion; a change which is world-wide, but is shown with especial clearness in the land which the Puritan founded.

In the scanty and grim yet heroic chronicles of John Winthrop there is occasionally a brief, terrible mention of some woman driven by religious broodings to distraction, sometimes to murder and suicide. How wide-spread the tragedy of which this was the extreme phase, we can but surmise. It first found full articulate expression in Mrs. Stowe,—but issuing in escape, by resource drawn from the same creed which had crushed it. The story is that of a mother, believing and thoughtful, whose unconverted son comes to a sudden death. Her thought of the fate she believes he has incurred, and of the Divine rule which decrees such a fate, and which she dares not disown,—the seeming contradiction between God and right which drives her almost to madness,—this description is as terrible as the most lurid passage in Dante. That which at last controls and calms is the same that sustains the slave in his extremity,—the vision of that Savior whose very nature is love, and who is the revelation of a God who must in some unguessed way supply the need of the creatures he has made. Around this fiery core the story stands—like a mountain with volcanic heart—in strong and graceful lines, and with rich vesture of beauty and humor. Its heroic figure is the minister and theologian, Dr. Hopkins; his absorption in theological speculation set off by his self-sacrifice in espousing the unpopular antislavery cause, and his magnanimous surrender of the woman he loves to the sailor who had won her heart.

‹The Minister's Wooing› marks the culmination of Mrs. Stowe's writing. Of her later works, the best have their scene in New England. ‹The Pearl of Orr's Island› has much of quiet beauty; and ‹Oldtown Folks,› while unequal and disappointing, furnishes some admirable scenes, and one of her raciest characters, and worthiest of long life,—the kindly ne'er-do-weel, Sam Lawson. In ‹Agnes of Sorrento› there is little creative power of character or story to match the beauty of landscape and atmosphere. The latest stories, with their scenes in modern American life, are slight in texture. It is chiefly by her first three books that she will live.

Mrs. Stowe's best work was done by a sort of spontaneous inspiration. She was not strong in deliberate and conscious art. An early letter gives a graphic description of the labor of authorship under constant intrusion from troublesome babies and incompetent servants. One can fancy some such distracting influence as occasionally marring her work in its details. It has not the finish of the student who writes in the guarded privacy of the library. Yet to the free, rough, wholesome contact with every-day life which forbade such seclusion, we perhaps owe much of the fresh and homely nature in her books, which charms us beyond mere artistic polish.

She has in a high degree the faculty of the greatest artists, of creating as it were their characters: so that the reader recognizes and recalls them as real people. She has a free, strong touch, not unlike Walter Scott's. But the critic feels diffidence in assigning definite literary rank to one who has been so closely a part of the still present age, and thus stands in a sort of personal relation to her contemporaries which perhaps bars them from the judgment seat. Yet it is hardly rash to express the opinion that measured by her best work, Mrs. Stowe stands as distinctly first among American novel-writers as do the others of her group in their respective fields: Hawthorne, in pure romance; Longfellow, Lowell, Whittier, Bryant, and Holmes, in poetry. No doubt she has been surpassed in various particulars; but judged by the test of power to win and to impress, and looking both at the number and the quality of the audience, it seems a moderate judgment that no American novelist has equaled her. Safer than any attempt to assign her rank in the world's literature is a characterization of the central quality of her mind and work. That, we may say, was the transfer of the essential spirit of Puritanism from the field of speculative theology and mystic experience to human duty and to social institutions. The austere, heroic spirit, which in the seventeenth century tried to build a Church-State in America; which, baffled in that attempt, fell back with renewed energy on universe-schemes,—that spirit has in our century found outlet and fruition in a new passion of service to humanity, while the conception of man's relation to God has passed from the idea of subject and monarch to that of child and father. In many lives has the change been exemplified, but in Mrs. Stowe we see it as wrought in a woman of strong brain and tender heart. In many respects she is a feminine counterpart of Whittier; he of Quaker, she of Puritan lineage; both serving in the antislavery cause; both passing on to a more personal interpretation of life; and both sublimating a dogmatic Christianity into a simple religion of love and trust, in which Christ is still the central figure, but a Christ of the heart and not of the creed.

Such comparison may contribute a little toward an appreciation of this large-natured woman and fine genius. But she is to be really known through her books, in which she expressed her best self.

George S. Merriam

Biographical and Bibliographical Note. — Harriet Elizabeth Beecher was born at Litchfield, Connecticut, June 14th, 1811. When thirteen years of age she went to Hartford, Connecticut, to attend the school of her sister Catherine. After studying for some years she assisted as a teacher in that institution. In 1832 the Beecher family moved to Cincinnati, Ohio; and four years later Harriet was married to Professor Calvin E. Stowe, of the Lane Theological Seminary in that city.

Her first book was ‘The Mayflower, or Sketches of the Descendants of the Pilgrims,’ published in 1849. The next year the Stowes went to Brunswick, Maine, Professor Stowe having taken a chair in Bowdoin College. ‘Uncle Tom's Cabin,’ which was written at Brunswick, began to run as a serial in the Washington National Era in 1851, and appeared in book form in 1852. Its success was immediate and phenomenal, half a million copies being printed within ten years, and the translations into foreign tongues numbering about thirty.

In the same year (1852) Professor Stowe was called to Andover Theological Seminary at Andover, Massachusetts. In 1853 the author published a ‘Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin,’ giving facts to substantiate her slave story. She made at this time the first of several European trips, during which she was received abroad with marked respect and honor. In 1864 the Stowes removed to Hartford, Connecticut, where Mrs. Stowe resided until her death, July 3d, 1896. For a long term of years she spent the summer months at her home in Florida.

Of the many editions of Mrs. Stowe's works, it is sufficient to direct the reader to the final, authoritative, and complete Riverside edition, 1896, issued by Houghton, Mifflin & Co. of Boston, in sixteen volumes, with a biographical sketch, notes, portraits, and views. The titles of the books, as they appear in this edition, are as follows: ‘Uncle Tom's Cabin’ and the ‘Key’ (two volumes), ‘Dred and Other Anti-Slavery Tales and Papers’ (two volumes), ‘The Minister's Wooing,’ ‘The Pearl of Orr's Island,’ ‘Agnes of Sorrento,’ ‘Household Papers and Stories,’ ‘My Wife and I,’ ‘Oldtown Folks’ and ‘Sam Lawson's Fireside Stories’ (two volumes), ‘Poganuc People’ and ‘Pink and White Tyranny,’ ‘We and Our Neighbors,’ ‘Stories, Sketches, and Studies,’ ‘Religious Studies,’ ‘Sketches and Poems,’ ‘Stories and Sketches for the Young.’ A full sympathetic account of Mrs. Stowe will be found in her ‘Life,’ written by her son, the Rev. Charles E. Stowe, which Houghton, Mifflin & Co. also publish.

HOW SAM AND ANDY HELPED HALEY TO PURSUE ELIZA

From ‹Uncle Tom's Cabin›

Never did fall of any prime minister at court occasion wider surges of sensation than the report of Tom's fate among his compeers on the place. It was the topic in every mouth, everywhere; and nothing was done in the house or in the field but to discuss its probable results. Eliza's flight—an unprecedented event on the place—was also a great accessory in stimulating the general excitement.

Black Sam, as he was commonly called, from his being about three shades blacker than any other son of ebony on the place, was revolving the matter profoundly in all its phases and bearings, with a comprehensiveness of vision and a strict lookout to his own personal well-being, that would have done credit to any white patriot in Washington.

«It's an ill wind dat blows nowhar,—dat are a fact,» said Sam sententiously, giving an additional hoist to his pantaloons, and adroitly substituting a long nail in place of a missing suspender button, with which effort of mechanical genius he seemed highly delighted.

«Yes: it's an ill wind blows nowhar,» he repeated. «Now, dar, Tom's down;—wal, course der's room for some nigger to be up—and why not dis nigger? dat's de idee. Tom, a-ridin' round de country, boots blacked, pass in his pocket, all grand as Cuffee,—who but he? Now, why shouldn't Sam? dat's what I want to know.»

«Halloo, Sam! O Sam! Mas'r wants you to cotch Bill and Jerry,» said Andy, cutting short Sam's soliloquy.

«Hi! what's afoot now, young un?»

«Why, you don't know, I s'pose, dat Lizy's cut stick and clar'd out with her young-un?»

«You teach your granny!» said Sam with infinite contempt: «knowed it a heap sight sooner than you did; this nigger ain't so green, now!»

«Well, anyhow, Mas'r wants Bill and Jerry geared right up; and you and I's to go with Mas'r Haley to look arter her.»

«Good, now! dat's de time o' day!» said Sam. «It's Sam dat's called for in dese yer times. He's de nigger. See if I don't cotch her, now: Mas'r 'll see what Sam can do!»

«Ah! but, Sam,» said Andy, «you'd better think twice; for Missis don't want her cotched, and she 'll be in yer wool.»

«Hi!» said Sam, opening his eyes. «How you know dat?»

«Heard her say so, my own self, dis blessed mornin' when I bring in Mas'r's shaving-water. She sent me to see why Lizy didn't come to dress her: and when I telled her she was off, she jest riz up, and ses she, 'The Lord be praised;' and Mas'r, he seemed rael mad, and ses he, 'Wife, you talk like a fool.' But Lor! she'll bring him to! I knows well enough how that'll be,— it's allers best to stand Missis's side de fence, now I tell yer.»

Black Sam, upon this, scratched his woolly pate, which, if it did not contain very profound wisdom, still contained a great deal of a particular species much in demand among politicians of all complexions and countries, and vulgarly denominated «knowing which side the bread is buttered»; so stopping with grave consideration, he again gave a hitch to his pantaloons, which was his regularly organized method of assisting his mental perplexities.

«Der ain't no sayin' — never — 'bout no kind o' thing in *dis* yer world,» he said at last.

Sam spoke like a philosopher, emphasizing *this*,— as if he had had a large experience in different sorts of worlds, and therefore had come to his conclusions advisedly.

«Now, sartin I'd 'a' said that Missis would 'a' scoured the 'varsal world after Lizy,» added Sam thoughtfully.

«So she would,» said Andy; «but can't ye see through a ladder, ye black nigger? Missis don't want dis yer Mas'r Haley to get Lizy's boy: dat's de go!»

«Hi!» said Sam, with an indescribable intonation, known only to those who have heard it among the negroes.

«And I'll tell yer more 'n all,» said Andy: «I spect you'd better be making tracks for dem hosses,— mighty sudden, too,— for I hearn Missis 'quirin' arter yer, so you've stood foolin' long enough.»

Sam, upon this, began to bestir himself in real earnest: and after a while appeared, bearing down gloriously towards the house, with Bill and Jerry in a full canter; and adroitly throwing himself off before they had any idea of stopping, he brought them up alongside of the horse-post like a tornado. Haley's horse, which was a skittish young colt, winced and bounced, and pulled hard at his halter.

"Ho, ho!" said Sam: "skeery, are ye?" and his black visage lighted up with a curious, mischievous gleam. "I'll fix ye now!" said he.

There was a large beech-tree overshadowing the place, and the small, sharp, triangular beech-nuts lay scattered thickly on the ground. With one of these in his fingers, Sam approached the colt, stroked and patted, and seemed apparently busy in soothing his agitation. On pretense of adjusting the saddle, he adroitly slipped under it the sharp little nut, in such a manner that the least weight brought upon the saddle would annoy the nervous sensibilities of the animal, without leaving any perceptible graze or wound.

"Dar!" he said, rolling his eyes with an approving grin, "me fix 'em!"

At this moment Mrs. Shelby appeared on the balcony, beckoning to him. Sam approached with as good a determination to pay court as did ever suitor after a vacant place at St. James's or Washington.

"Why have you been loitering so, Sam? I sent Andy to tell you to hurry."

"Lord bless you, Missis!" said Sam, "horses won't be cotched all in a minnit: they'd done clar'd out way down to the south pasture, and the Lord knows whar!"

"Sam, how often must I tell you not to say 'Lord bless you,' and 'The Lord knows,' and such things? It's wicked."

"Oh, Lord bless my soul! I done forgot, Missis! I won't say nothing of de sort no more."

"Why, Sam, you just *have* said it again."

"Did I? O Lord!—I mean, I didn't go fur to say it."

"You must be *careful*, Sam."

"Just let me get my breath, Missis, and I'll start fair. I'll be bery careful."

"Well, Sam, you are to go with Mr. Haley, to show him the road, and help him. Be careful of the horses, Sam; you know Jerry was a little lame last week: *don't ride them too fast.*"

Mrs. Shelby spoke the last words with a low voice and strong emphasis.

"Let dis child alone for dat!" said Sam, rolling up his eyes with a volume of meaning. "Lord knows—hi! didn't say dat!" said he, suddenly catching his breath, with a ludicrous flourish of apprehension which made his mistress laugh, spite of herself. "Yes, Missis, I'll look out for de hosses!"

«Now, Andy,» said Sam, returning to his stand under the beech-tree, «you see I wouldn't be 't all surprised if dat ar gen'lman's crittur should gib a fling, by-and-by, when he comes to be a-gettin' up. You know, Andy, critturs *will* do such things;» and therewith Sam poked Andy in the side in a highly suggestive manner.

«Hi!» said Andy, with an air of instant appreciation.

«Yes, you see, Andy, Missis wants to make time: dat ar's clar to der most or'nary 'bserver. I jis make a little for her. Now, you see, get all dese yer hosses loose, caperin' permiscus round dis yer lot and down to de wood dar, and I spec Mas'r won't be off in a hurry.»

Andy grinned.

«Yer see,» said Sam,—«yer see, Andy, if any such thing should happen as that Mas'r Haley's horse *should* begin to act contrary, and cut up, you and I jist lets go of our'n to help him, and *we'll help him:* oh, yes!» And Sam and Andy laid their heads back on their shoulders, and broke into a low, immoderate laugh, snapping their fingers and flourishing their heels with exquisite delight.

At this instant, Haley appeared on the veranda. Somewhat mollified by certain cups of very good coffee, he came out smiling and talking, in tolerably restored humor. Sam and Andy, clawing for certain fragmentary palm-leaves which they were in the habit of considering as hats, flew to the horse-posts to be ready to «help Mas'r.»

Sam's palm-leaf had been ingeniously disentangled from all pretensions to braid, as respects its brim; and the slivers starting apart and standing upright gave it a blazing air of freedom and defiance, quite equal to that of any Fiji chief: while the whole brim of Andy's being departed bodily, he rapped the crown on his head with a dexterous thump, and looked about well pleased, as if to say, «Who says I haven't got a hat!»

«Well, boys,» said Haley, «look alive now: we must lose no time.»

«Not a bit of him, Mas'r!» said Sam, putting Haley's rein in his hand and holding his stirrup, while Andy was untying the other two horses.

The instant Haley touched the saddle, the mettlesome creature bounded from the earth with a sudden spring, that threw his master sprawling some feet off on the soft, dry turf. Sam, with frantic ejaculations, made a dive at the reins, but only succeeded in brushing the blazing palmleaf afore-named into the horse's eyes, which by no means tended to allay the confusion of his nerves. So with great vehemence he overturned Sam, and giving two or three contemptuous snorts, flourished his heels vigorously in the air, and was soon prancing away towards the lower end of the lawn; followed by Bill and Jerry, whom Andy had not failed to let loose according to contract, speeding them off with various direful ejaculations. And now ensued a miscellaneous scene of confusion. Sam and Andy ran and shouted; dogs barked here and there; and Mike, Mose, Mandy, Fanny, and all the smaller specimens on the place, both male and female, raced, clapped hands, whooped, and shouted, with outrageous officiousness and untiring zeal.

Haley's horse, which was a white one, and very fleet and spirited, appeared to enter into the spirit of the scene with great gusto: and having for his coursing ground a lawn of nearly half a mile in extent, gently sloping down on every side into indefinite woodland, he appeared to take infinite delight in seeing how near he could allow his pursuers to approach him; and then, when within a hand's-breadth, whisk off with a start and a snort, like a mischievous beast as he was, and career far down into some alley of the wood-lot. Nothing was further from Sam's mind than to have any one of the troop taken until such season as should seem to him most befitting; and the exertions that he made were certainly most heroic. Like the sword of Cœur de Lion, which always blazed in the front and thickest of the battle, Sam's palm-leaf was to be seen everywhere when there was the least danger that a horse could be caught: there he would bear down full tilt, shouting, "Now for it! cotch him! cotch him!" in a way that would set everything to indiscriminate rout in a moment.

Haley ran up and down, and cursed and swore and stamped miscellaneously. Mr. Shelby in vain tried to shout directions from the balcony, and Mrs. Shelby from her chamber window alternately laughed and wondered; not without some inkling of what lay at the bottom of all this confusion.

At last, about twelve o'clock, Sam appeared triumphant, mounted on Jerry, with Haley's horse by his side, reeking with sweat, but with flashing eyes and dilated nostrils, showing that the spirit of freedom had not yet entirely subsided.

"He's cotched!" he exclaimed triumphantly. "If it hadn't been for me, they might 'a' bust theirselves, all on 'em; but I cotched him!"

"You!" growled Haley, in no amiable mood. "If it hadn't been for you this never would have happened."

"Lord bless us, Mas'r," said Sam, in a tone of the deepest concern, "and me that has been racin' and chasin' till the sweat jest pours off me!"

"Well, well!" said Haley, "you've lost me near three hours with your cursed nonsense. Now let's be off, and have no more fooling."

"Why, Mas'r," said Sam in a deprecating tone, "I believe you mean to kill us all clar, hosses and all. Here we are all jest ready to drop down, and the critturs all in a reek of sweat. Why, Mas'r won't think of startin' on now till after dinner. Mas'r's hoss wants rubbin' down,—see how he splashed hissef; and Jerry limps too;—don't think Missis would be willin' to have us start dis yer way, nohow. Lord bless you, Mas'r, we can ketch up if we do stop. Lizy never was no great of a walker."

Mrs. Shelby, who, greatly to her amusement, had overheard this conversation from the veranda, now resolved to do her part. She came forward, and courteously expressing her concern for Haley's accident, pressed him to stay to dinner, saying that the cook should bring it on the table immediately.

Thus, all things considered, Haley with rather an equivocal grace proceeded to the parlor; while Sam, rolling his eyes after him with unutterable meaning, proceeded gravely with the horses to the stable-yard.

"Did yer see him, Andy? *did* yer see him?" said Sam, when he had got fairly beyond the shelter of the barn, and fastened the horse to a post. "O Lord, if it warn't as good as a meetin', now, to see him a-dancin' and kickin' and swarin' at us. Didn't I hear him? Swar away, ole fellow, says I to myself; will yer have yer hoss now, or wait till you cotch him? says I. Lord, Andy, I think I can see him now." And Sam and Andy leaned up against the barn, and laughed to their hearts' content.

"Yer oughter seen how mad he looked when I brought the hoss up. Lord, he'd 'a' killed me if he durs' to; and there I was a-standin' as innercent and as humble."

"Lord, I seed you," said Andy: "ain't you an old hoss, Sam!"

"Rather spects I am," said Sam: "did yer see Missis up-stars at the winder? I seed her laughin'."

"I'm sure I was racin' so I didn't see nothin'," said Andy.

"Well, yer see," said Sam, proceeding gravely to wash down Haley's pony, "I'se 'quired what ye may call a habit o' *bobservation*, Andy. It's a very 'portant habit, Andy, and I 'commend yer ter be cultivatin' it, now ye're young. Hist up that hind foot, Andy. Yer see, Andy, it's *bobservation* makes all de difference in niggers. Didn't I see which way the wind blew dis yer mornin'? Didn't I see what Missis wanted, though she never let on? Dat ar's bobservation, Andy. I spects it's what you may call a faculty. Faculties is different in different peoples, but cultivation of 'em goes a great way."

"I guess if I hadn't helped your bobservation dis mornin', yer wouldn't have seen your way so smart," said Andy.

"Andy," said Sam, "you's a promisin' child, der ain't no manner o' doubt. I think lots of yer, Andy; and I don't feel noways ashamed to take idees from you. We oughtenter overlook nobody, Andy, 'cause the smartest on us gets tripped up sometimes. And so, Andy, let's go up to the house now. I'll be boun' Missis 'll give us an uncommon good bite dis yer time."

ELIZA'S FLIGHT

From 'Uncle Tom's Cabin'

It is impossible to conceive of a human creature more wholly desolate and forlorn than Eliza, when she turned her footsteps from Uncle Tom's cabin.

Her husband's suffering and dangers, and the danger of her child, all blended in her mind with a confused and stunning sense of the risk she was running in leaving the only home she had ever known, and cutting loose from the protection of a friend whom she loved and revered. Then there was the parting from every familiar object: the place where she had grown up, the trees under which she had played, the groves where she had walked many an evening in happier days, by the side of her young husband,—everything, as it lay in the clear, frosty starlight, seemed to speak reproachfully to her, and ask her whither she could go from a home like that?

But stronger than all was maternal love, wrought into a paroxysm of frenzy by the near approach of a fearful danger. Her boy was old enough to have walked by her side, and in an indifferent case she would only have led him by the hand; but now the bare thought of putting him out of her arms made her shudder, and she strained him to her bosom with a convulsive grasp as she went rapidly forward.

The frosty ground creaked beneath her feet, and she trembled at the sound; every quaking leaf and fluttering shadow sent the blood backward to her heart, and quickened her footsteps. She wondered within herself at the strength that seemed to be come upon her; for she felt the weight of her boy as if it had been a feather, and every flutter of fear seemed to increase the supernatural power that bore her on, while from her pale lips burst forth in frequent ejaculations the prayer to a Friend above: «Lord, help! Lord, save me!»

If it were *your* Harry, mother, or your Willie, that were going to be torn from you by a brutal trader to-morrow morning,—if you had seen the man, and heard that the papers were signed and delivered, and you had only from twelve o'clock till morning to make good your escape,—how fast could *you* walk? How many miles could you make in those few brief hours, with the darling at your bosom, the little sleepy head on your shoulder, the small soft arms trustingly holding on to your neck?

For the child slept. At first the novelty and alarm kept him waking; but his mother so hurriedly repressed every breath or sound, and so assured him that if he were only still she would certainly save him, that he clung quietly round her neck, only asking as he found himself sinking to sleep:—

«Mother, I don't need to keep awake, do I?»

«No, my darling: sleep if you want to.»

«But, mother, if I do get asleep, you won't let him get me?»

«No! so may God help me!» said his mother, with a paler cheek, and a brighter light in her large dark eyes.

«You're *sure*, ain't you, mother?»

«Yes, *sure!*» said the mother, in a voice that startled herself—for it seemed to her to come from a spirit within, that was no part of her; and the boy dropped his little weary head on her shoulder and was soon asleep. How the touch of those warm arms, and gentle breathings that came in her neck, seemed to add fire and spirit to her movements! It seemed to her as if strength poured into her in electric streams from every gentle touch and movement of the sleeping, confiding child. Sublime is the dominion of the mind over the body, that for a time can make flesh and nerve impregnable, and string the sinews like steel, so that the weak become so mighty.

The boundaries of the farm, the grove, the wood-lot, passed by her dizzily, as she walked on; and still she went, leaving one familiar object after another, slacking not, pausing not, till reddening daylight found her many a long mile from all traces of any familiar objects upon the open highway.

She had often been with her mistress to visit some connections in the little village of T——, not far from the Ohio River; and knew the road well. To go thither, to escape across the Ohio River, were the first hurried outlines of her plan of escape; beyond that, she could only hope in God.

When horses and vehicles began to move along the highway, with that alert perception peculiar to a state of excitement, and which seems to be a sort of inspiration, she became aware that her headlong pace and distracted air might bring on her remark and suspicion. She therefore put the boy on the ground; and adjusting her dress and bonnet, she walked on at as rapid a pace as she thought consistent with the preservation of appearances. In her little bundle she had provided a store of cakes and apples, which she used as expedients for quickening the speed of the child; rolling the apple some yards before them, when the boy would run with all his might after it: and this ruse, often repeated, carried them over many a half-mile.

After a while they came to a thick patch of woodland, through which murmured a clear brook. As the child complained of hunger and thirst, she climbed over the fence with him; and sitting down behind a large rock which concealed them from the road, she gave him a breakfast out of her little package. The boy wondered and grieved that she could not eat; and when, putting his arms round her neck, he tried to wedge some of his cake into her mouth, it seemed to her that the rising in her throat would choke her.

"No, no, Harry darling! mother can't eat till you are safe! We must go on — on — till we come to the river!" And she hurried again into the road, and again constrained herself to walk regularly and composedly forward.

She was many miles past any neighborhood where she was personally known. If she should chance to meet any who knew her, she reflected that the well-known kindness of the family would be of itself a blind to suspicion, as making it an unlikely supposition that she could be a fugitive. As she was also so white as not to be known as of colored lineage, without a critical survey, and her child was white also, it was much easier for her to pass on unsuspected.

On this presumption, she stopped at noon at a neat farmhouse, to rest herself and buy some dinner for her child and self; for as the danger decreased with the distance, the supernatural tension of the nervous system lessened, and she found herself both weary and hungry.

The good woman, kindly and gossiping, seemed rather pleased than otherwise with having somebody come in to talk with, and accepted without examination Eliza's statement that she "was going on a little piece, to spend a week with her friends": all which she hoped in her heart might prove strictly true.

An hour before sunset she entered the village of T——, by the Ohio River, weary and footsore but still strong in heart. Her first glance was at the river, which lay, like Jordan, between her and the Canaan of liberty on the other side.

It was now early spring, and the river was swollen and turbulent; great cakes of floating ice were swinging heavily to and fro in the turbid waters. Owing to the peculiar form of the shore on the Kentucky side, the land bending far out into the water, the ice had been lodged and detained in great quantities; and the narrow channel which swept round the bend was full of ice, piled one cake over another, thus forming a temporary barrier to the descending ice, which lodged and formed a great undulating raft, filling up the whole river and extending almost to the Kentucky shore.

Eliza stood for a moment contemplating this unfavorable aspect of things, which she saw at once must prevent the usual ferry-boat from running; and then turned into a small public house on the bank to make a few inquiries.

The hostess, who was busy in various fizzing and stewing operations over the fire, preparatory to the evening meal, stopped with a fork in her hand, as Eliza's sweet and plaintive voice arrested her.

«What is it?» she said.

«Isn't there any ferry or boat that takes people over to B—— now?» she said.

«No, indeed!» said the woman: «the boats has stopped running.»

Eliza's look of dismay and disappointment struck the woman, and she said inquiringly:—

«Maybe you're wanting to get over? Anybody sick? Ye seem mighty anxious!»

«I've got a child that's very dangerous,» said Eliza. «I never heard of it till last night, and I've walked quite a piece to-day, in hopes to get to the ferry.»

«Well, now, that's onlucky,» said the woman, whose motherly sympathies were much aroused: «I'm re'lly consarned for ye. Solomon!» she called from the window towards a small back building. A man in leather apron and very dirty hands appeared at the door.

«I say, Sol,» said the woman, «is that ar man going to tote them bar'ls over to-night?»

«He said he should try, if 'twas anyway prudent,» said the man.

«There's a man a piece down here that's going over with some truck this evening, if he durs' to; he'll be in here to supper to-night, so you'd better set down and wait. That's a sweet little fellow,» added the woman, offering him a cake.

But the child, wholly exhausted, cried with weariness.

«Poor fellow! he isn't used to walking, and I've hurried him on so,» said Eliza.

«Well, take him into this room,» said the woman, opening into a small bedroom, where stood a comfortable bed. Eliza laid the weary boy upon it, and held his hands in hers till he was fast asleep. For her there was no rest. As a fire in her bones, the thought of the pursuer urged her on; and she gazed with longing eyes on the sullen, surging waters that lay between her and liberty.

Here we must take our leave of her for the present, to follow the course of her pursuers.

At two o'clock Sam and Andy brought the horses up to the posts, apparently greatly refreshed and invigorated by the scamper of the morning.

Sam was there, new oiled from dinner, with an abundance of zealous and ready officiousness. As Haley approached, he was boasting in flourishing style to Andy of the evident and eminent success of the operation, now that he had «farly come to it.»

«Your master, I s'pose, don't keep no dogs?» said Haley thoughtfully, as he prepared to mount.

«Heaps on 'em,» said Sam triumphantly: «thar's Bruno — he's a roarer! and besides that, 'bout every nigger of us keeps a pup of some natur' or other.»

«Poh!» said Haley,— and he said something else too, with regard to the said dogs; at which Sam muttered:—

«I don't see no use cussin' on 'em, noway.»

«But your master don't keep no dogs (I pretty much know he don't) for trackin' out niggers?»

Sam knew exactly what he meant, but he kept on a look of earnest and desperate simplicity.

«Our dogs all smells round consid'able sharp. I spect they's the kind, though they hain't never had no practice. They's *far* dogs, though, at most anything, if you'd get 'em started. Here, Bruno,» he called, whistling to the lumbering Newfoundland, who came pitching tumultuously toward them.

«You go hang!» said Haley, getting up. «Come, tumble up now.»

Sam tumbled up accordingly, dexterously contriving to tickle Andy as he did so; which occasioned Andy to split out into a laugh, greatly to Haley's indignation, who made a cut at him with his riding-whip.

«I 's 'stonished at yer, Andy,» said Sam with awful gravity; «this yer's a seris bisness, Andy. Yer mustn't be a-makin' game. This yer ain't no way to help Mas'r.»

«I shall take the straight road to the river,» said Haley decidedly, after they had come to the boundaries of the estate. «I know the way of all of 'em: they makes tracks for the underground.»

«Sartin,» said Sam, «dat's de idee. Mas'r Haley hits de thing right in de middle. Now der's two roads to de river,— de dirt road and der pike: which Mas'r mean to take?»

Andy looked up innocently at Sam, surprised at hearing this new geographical fact; but instantly confirmed what he said by a vehement reiteration.

"'Cause," said Sam, "I'd rather be 'clined to 'magine that Lizy 'd take de dirt road, bein' it's the least traveled."

Haley, notwithstanding that he was a very old bird, and naturally inclined to be suspicious of chaff, was rather brought up by this view of the case.

"If yer warn't both on yer such cussed liars, now!" he said contemplatively, as he pondered a moment.

The pensive, reflective tone in which this was spoken appeared to amuse Andy prodigiously, and he drew a little behind, and shook so as apparently to run a great risk of falling off his horse; while Sam's face was immovably composed into the most doleful gravity.

"Course," said Sam, "Mas'r can do as he'd ruther; go de straight road, if Mas'r thinks best,—it's all one to us. Now when I study 'pon it, I think the straight road the best, *deridedly.*"

"She would naturally go a lonesome way," said Haley, thinking aloud, and not minding Sam's remark.

"Dar ain't no sayin'," said Sam: "gals is pecular: they never does nothin' ye thinks they will; mose gen'lly the contrar. Gals is nat'lly made contrary; and so if you thinks they've gone one road, it is sartin you'd better go t' other, and then you'll be sure to find 'em. Now my private 'pinion is, Lizy took der dirt road; so I think we'd better take de straight one."

This profound generic view of the female sex did not seem to dispose Haley particularly to the straight road; and he announced decidedly that he should go the other, and asked Sam when they should come to it.

"A little piece ahead," said Sam, giving a wink to Andy with the eye which was on Andy's side of the head; and he added gravely, "but I've studied on the matter, and I'm quite clar we ought not to go dat ar way. I nebber been over it noway. It's despit lonesome, and we might lose our way: whar we'd come to, de Lord only knows."

"Nevertheless," said Haley, "I shall go that way."

"Now I think on 't, I think I hearn 'em tell dat ar road was all fenced up and down by der creek, and thar—ain't it, Andy?"

Andy wasn't certain; he'd only « hearn tell » about that road, but never been over it. In short, he was strictly non-committal.

Haley, accustomed to strike the balance of probabilities between lies of greater or lesser magnitude, thought that it lay in favor of the dirt road aforesaid. The mention of the thing he thought he perceived was involuntary on Sam's part at first, and his confused attempts to dissuade him he set down to a desperate lying on second thoughts, as being unwilling to implicate Eliza.

When therefore Sam indicated the road, Haley plunged briskly into it, followed by Sam and Andy.

Now the road, in fact, was an old one that had formerly been a thoroughfare to the river, but abandoned for many years after the laying of the new pike. It was open for about an hour's ride, and after that it was cut across by various farms and fences. Sam knew this fact perfectly well: indeed, the road had been so long closed up that Andy had never heard of it. He therefore rode along with an air of dutiful submission, only groaning and vociferating occasionally that 'twas « desp't rough, and bad for Jerry's foot.»

« Now I jest give yer warning,» said Haley, « I know yer: yer won't get me to turn off this yer road, with all yer fussin'; so you shet up! »

« Mas'r will go his own way! » said Sam with rueful submission; at the same time winking most portentously to Andy, whose delight was now very near the explosive point.

Sam was in wonderful spirits; professed to keep a very brisk lookout: at one time exclaiming that he saw « a gal's bonnet » on the top of some distant eminence, or calling to Andy « if that thar wasn't Lizy down in the hollow »; always making these exclamations in some rough or craggy part of the road, where the sudden quickening of speed was a special inconvenience to all parties concerned, and thus keeping Haley in a state of constant commotion.

After riding about an hour in this way, the whole party made a precipitate and tumultuous descent into a barnyard belonging to a large farming establishment. Not a soul was in sight, all the hands being employed in the fields; but as the barn stood conspicuously and plainly square across the road, it was evident that their journey in that direction had reached a decided finale.

"Warn't dat ar what I telled Mas'r?" said Sam, with an air of injured innocence. "How does strange gentlemen spect to know more about a country dan de natives born and raised?"

"You rascal!" said Haley, "you knew all about this."

"Didn't I tell yer I *know'd*, and yer wouldn't believe me? I telled Mas'r 'twas all shet up, and fenced up, and I didn't spect we could get through: Andy heard me."

It was all too true to be disputed, and the unlucky man had to pocket his wrath with the best grace he was able; and all three faced to the right about, and took up their line of march for the highway.

In consequence of all the various delays, it was about three-quarters of an hour after Eliza had laid her child to sleep in the village tavern that the party came riding into the same place. Eliza was standing by the window, looking out in another direction, when Sam's quick eye caught a glimpse of her. Haley and Andy were two yards behind. At this crisis Sam contrived to have his hat blown off, and uttered a loud and characteristic ejaculation, which startled her at once; she drew suddenly back: the whole train swept by the window round to the front door.

A thousand lives seemed to be concentrated in that one moment to Eliza. Her room opened by a side door to the river. She caught her child, and sprang down the steps towards it. The trader caught a full glimpse of her, just as she was disappearing down the bank; and throwing himself from his horse, and calling loudly on Sam and Andy, he was after her like a hound after a deer. In that dizzy moment her feet to her scarce seemed to touch the ground, and a moment brought her to the water's edge. Right on behind they came; and nerved with strength such as God gives only to the desperate, with one wild cry and flying leap she vaulted sheer over the turbid current by the shore on to the raft of ice beyond. It was a desperate leap,— impossible to anything but madness and despair; and Haley, Sam, and Andy instinctively cried out, and lifted up their hands as she did it.

The huge green fragment of ice on which she alighted, pitched and creaked as her weight came on it; but she stayed there not a moment. With wild cries and desperate energy she leaped to another and still another cake; stumbling — leaping — slipping — springing upwards again! Her shoes were gone, her stockings cut from her feet, while blood marked every step; but she saw nothing, felt nothing, till dimly, as in a dream, she saw the Ohio side, and a man helping her up the bank.

« Yer a brave gal, now, whoever ye are! » said the man with an oath.

Eliza recognized the voice and face of a man who owned a farm not far from her old home.

« O Mr. Symmes! — save me — do save me — do hide me! » said Eliza.

« Why, what's this? » said the man. « Why, if 't ain't Shelby's gal! »

« My child! — this boy! — he'd sold him! There is his Mas'r, » said she, pointing to the Kentucky shore. « O Mr. Symmes, you've got a little boy! »

« So I have, » said the man, as he roughly but kindly drew her up the steep bank. « Besides, you're a right brave gal. I like grit wherever I see it. »

When they had gained the top of the bank, the man paused. « I'd be glad to do something for ye, » said he; « but then there's nowhar I could take ye. The best I can do is to tell ye to go *thar*, » said he, pointing to a large white house which stood by itself, off the main street of the village. « Go thar: they're kind folks. Thar's no kind o' danger but they'll help you: they're up to all that sort o' thing. »

« The Lord bless you! » said Eliza earnestly.

« No 'casion, no 'casion in the world, » said the man. « What I've done's of no 'count. »

« And oh, surely, sir, you won't tell any one! »

« Go to thunder, gal! What do you take a feller for? In course not, » said the man. « Come, now, go along like a likely, sensible gal, as you are. You've arnt your liberty; and you shall have it, for all me. »

The woman folded her child to her bosom, and walked firmly and swiftly away. The man stood and looked after her.

« Shelby, now, mebbe won't think this yer the most neighborly thing in the world; but what's a feller to do? If he catches one of my gals in the same fix, he's welcome to pay back. Somehow I never could see no kind o' critter a-strivin' and pantin', and tryin' to cl'ar theirselves, with the dogs arter 'em, and go agin 'em. Besides, I don't see no kind o' 'casion for me to be hunter and catcher for other folks, neither. »

TOPSY

From ‹Uncle Tom's Cabin›

One morning while Miss Ophelia was busy in some of her domestic cares, St. Clare's voice was heard, calling her at the foot of the stairs.

«Come down here, cousin: I've something to show you.»

«What is it?» said Miss Ophelia, coming down with her sewing in her hand.

«I've made a purchase for your department: see here,» said St. Clare; and with the word he pulled along a little negro girl about eight or nine years of age.

She was one of the blackest of her race; and her round, shining eyes, glittering as glass beads, moved with quick and restless glances over everything in the room. Her mouth, half open with astonishment at the wonders of the new Mas'r's parlor, displayed a white and brilliant set of teeth. Her woolly hair was braided in sundry little tails, which stuck out in every direction. The expression of her face was an odd mixture of shrewdness and cunning, over which was oddly drawn, like a kind of veil, an expression of the most doleful gravity and solemnity. She was dressed in a single filthy, ragged garment, made of bagging; and stood with her hands demurely folded before her. Altogether, there was something odd and goblin-like about her appearance,—something, as Miss Ophelia afterwards said, «so heathenish,» as to inspire that good lady with utter dismay; and turning to St. Clare, she said:—

«Augustine, what in the world have you brought that thing here for?»

«For you to educate, to be sure, and train in the way she should go. I thought she was rather a funny specimen in the Jim Crow line. Here, Topsy,» he added, giving a whistle, as a man would call the attention of a dog, «give us a song, now, and show us some of your dancing.»

The black, glassy eyes glittered with a kind of wicked drollery, and the thing struck up in a clear shrill voice an odd negro melody, to which she kept time with her hands and feet, spinning round, clapping her hands, knocking her knees together, in a wild, fantastic sort of time, and producing in her throat all those odd guttural sounds which distinguish the native music of her race; and finally, turning a summerset or two, and giving a prolonged closing note, as odd and unearthly as that of a steam-whistle, she came suddenly down on the carpet, and stood with her hands folded, and a most sanctimonious expression of meekness and solemnity over her face, only broken by the cunning glances which she shot askance from the corners of her eyes.

Miss Ophelia stood silent; perfectly paralyzed with amazement.

St. Clare, like a mischievous fellow as he was, appeared to enjoy her astonishment; and addressing the child again, said:—

«Topsy, this is your new mistress. I'm going to give you up to her; see now that you behave yourself.»

«Yes, Mas'r,» said Topsy, with sanctimonious gravity, her wicked eyes twinkling as she spoke.

«You're going to be good, Topsy, you understand,» said St. Clare.

«Oh, yes, Mas'r,» said Topsy, with another twinkle, her hands still devoutly folded.

«Now, Augustine, what upon earth is this for?» said Miss Ophelia. «Your house is so full of these little plagues now, that a body can't set down their foot without treading on 'em. I get up in the morning, and find one asleep behind the door, and see one black head poking out from under the table, one lying on the door-mat; and they are mopping and mowing and grinning between all the railings, and tumbling over the kitchen floor! What on earth did you want to bring this one for?»

«For you to educate, didn't I tell you? You're always preaching about educating. I thought I would make you a present of a fresh-caught specimen, and let you try your hand on her, and bring her up in the way she should go.»

«*I* don't want her, I am sure: I have more to do with 'em now than I want to.»

«That's you Christians, all over! You'll get up a society, and get some poor missionary to spend all his days among just such heathen; but let me see one of you that would take one into your house with you, and take the labor of their conversion on yourselves! No: when it comes to that, they are dirty and disagreeable, and it's too much care, and so on.»

«Augustine, you know I didn't think of it in that light,» said Miss Ophelia, evidently softening. «Well, it might be a real missionary work," said she, looking rather more favorably on the child.

St. Clare had touched the right string. Miss Ophelia's conscientiousness was ever on the alert.

"But," she added, "I really didn't see the need of buying this one: there are enough now in your house to take all my time and skill."

"Well, then, cousin," said St. Clare, drawing her aside, "I ought to beg your pardon for my good-for-nothing speeches. You are so good, after all, that there's no sense in them. Why, the fact is, this concern belonged to a couple of drunken creatures that keep a low restaurant that I have to pass by every day; and I was tired of hearing her screaming, and them beating and swearing at her. She looked bright and funny too, as if something might be made of her; so I bought her, and I'll give her to you. Try now, and give her a good orthodox New England bringing-up, and see what it'll make of her. You know I haven't any gift that way; but I'd like you to try."

"Well, I'll do what I can," said Miss Ophelia; and she approached her new subject very much as a person might be supposed to approach a black spider, supposing them to have benevolent designs toward it.

"She's dreadfully dirty, and half naked," she said.

"Well, take her down-stairs, and make some of them clean and clothe her up."

Miss Ophelia carried her to the kitchen regions.

"Don't see what Mas'r St. Clare wants of 'nother nigger!" said Dinah, surveying the new arrival with no friendly air. "Won't have her round under *my* feet, *I* know!"

"Pah!" said Rosa and Jane, with supreme disgust: "let her keep out of our way! What in the world Mas'r wanted another of these low niggers for, I can't see!"

"You go 'long! No more nigger dan you be, Miss Rosa," said Dinah, who felt this last remark a reflection on herself. "You seem to tink yourself white folks. You ain't nerry one, black *nor* white. I'd like to be one or turrer."

Miss Ophelia saw that there was nobody in the camp that would undertake to oversee the cleansing and dressing of the new arrival; and so she was forced to do it herself, with some very ungracious and reluctant assistance from Jane.

It is not for ears polite to hear the particulars of the first toilet of a neglected, abused child. In fact, in this world, multitudes must live and die in a state that it would be too great a shock to the nerves of their fellow-mortals even to hear described.

Miss Ophelia had a good, strong, practical deal of resolution: and she went through all the disgusting details with heroic thoroughness, though it must be confessed, with no very gracious air; for endurance was the utmost to which her principles could bring her. When she saw, on the back and shoulders of the child, great welts and calloused spots, ineffaceable marks of the system under which she had grown up thus far, her heart became pitiful within her.

«See there!» said Jane, pointing to the marks, «don't that show she's a limb? We'll have fine works with her, I reckon. I hate these nigger young-uns! so disgusting! I wonder that Mas'r would buy her!»

The «young-un» alluded to heard all these comments with the subdued and doleful air which seemed habitual to her; only scanning, with a keen and furtive glance of her flickering eyes, the ornaments which Jane wore in her ears. When arrayed at last in a suit of decent and whole clothing, her hair cropped short to her head, Miss Ophelia, with some satisfaction, said she looked more Christian-like than she did; and in her own mind began to mature some plans for her instruction.

Sitting down before her, she began to question her.

«How old are you, Topsy?»

«Dunno, Missis,» said the image, with a grin that showed all her teeth.

«Don't know how old you are? Didn't anybody ever tell you? Who was your mother?»

«Never had none!» said the child with another grin.

«Never had any mother? What do you mean? Where were you born?»

«Never was born!» persisted Topsy, with another grin, that looked so goblin-like that if Miss Ophelia had been at all nervous, she might have fancied that she had got hold of some sooty gnome from the land of Diablerie; but Miss Ophelia was not nervous, but plain and business-like, and she said with some sternness:—

« You mustn't answer me in that way, child. I'm not playing with you. Tell me where you were born, and who your father and mother were.»

« Never was born,» reiterated the creature, more emphatically; «never had no father nor mother, nor nothin'. I was raised by a speculator, with lots of others. Old Aunt Sue used to take car' on us.»

The child was evidently sincere; and Jane, breaking into a short laugh, said: —

« Laws, Missis, there's heaps of 'em. Speculators buys 'em up cheap, when they's little, and gets 'em raised for market.»

« How long have you lived with your master and mistress?»

« Dunno, Missis.»

« Is it a year, or more, or less?»

« Dunno, Missis.»

« Laws, Missis, those low negroes — they can't tell: they don't know anything about time,» said Jane; « they don't know what a year is; they don't know their own ages.»

« Have you ever heard anything about God, Topsy?»

The child looked bewildered, but grinned as usual.

« Do you know who made you?»

« Nobody, as I knows on,» said the child with a short laugh.

The idea appeared to amuse her considerably; for her eyes twinkled, and she added: —

« I spect I growed. Don't think nobody never made me.»

« Do you know how to sew?» said Miss Ophelia, who thought she would turn her inquiries to something more tangible.

« No, Missis.»

« What can you do? what did you do for your master and mistress?»

« Fetch water, and wash dishes, and rub knives, and wait on folks.»

« Were they good to you?»

« Spect they was,» said the child, scanning Miss Ophelia cunningly.

Miss Ophelia rose from this encouraging colloquy; St. Clare was leaning over the back of her chair.

« You find virgin soil there, cousin: put in your own ideas; you won't find many to pull up.»

. . . .

On one occasion, Miss Ophelia found Topsy with her very best scarlet India Canton crape shawl wound around her head for a turban, going on with her rehearsals before the glass in great style: Miss Ophelia having, with carelessness most unheard-of in her, left the key for once in her drawer.

«Topsy!» she would say, when at the end of all patience, «what does make you act so?»

«Dunno, Missis: I spects 'cause I's so wicked!»

«I don't know anything what I shall do with you, Topsy.»

«Law, Missis, you must whip me; my old Missis allers whipped me. I ain't used to workin' unless I gets whipped.»

«Why, Topsy, I don't want to whip you. You can do well, if you've a mind to: what is the reason you won't?»

«Law, Missis, I's used to whippin': I spects it's good for me.»

Miss Ophelia tried the recipe, and Topsy invariably made a terrible commotion, screaming, groaning, and imploring; though half an hour afterwards, when roosted on some projection of the balcony, and surrounded by a flock of admiring «young-uns,» she would express the utmost contempt of the whole affair.

«Law, Miss Feely whip! Wouldn't kill a skeeter, her whippin's. Oughter see how old Mas'r made de flesh fly: old Mas'r know'd how!»

Topsy always made great capital of her own sins and enormities, evidently considering them as something peculiarly distinguishing.

«Law, you niggers,» she would say to some of her auditors, «does you know you's all sinners? Well, you is,—everybody is. White folks is sinners too,—Miss Feely says so: but I spects niggers is the biggest ones; but lor! ye ain't any on ye up to me. I's so awful wicked there can't nobody do nothin' with me. I used to keep old Missis a-swarin' at me half de time. I spects I'se de wickedest crittur in de world;» and Topsy would cut a summerset, and come up brisk and shining on to a higher perch, and evidently plume herself on the distinction.

AARON BURR AND MARY

From ‘The Minister's Wooing’

When, with his peculiarly engaging smile, he [Burr] offered his arm, she felt a little of the flutter natural to a modest young person unexpectedly honored with the notice of one of the great ones of the earth, whom it is seldom the lot of humble individuals to know except by distant report.

But although Mary was a blushing and sensitive person, she was not what is commonly called a diffident girl: her nerves had that healthy, steady poise which gave her presence of mind in the most unwonted circumstances.

The first few sentences addressed to her by her new companion were in a tone and style altogether different from any in which she had ever been approached,—different from the dashing frankness of her sailor lover, and from the rustic gallantry of her other admirers.

That indescribable mixture of ease and deference, guided by refined tact, which shows the practiced, high-bred man of the world, made its impression on her immediately, as a breeze on the cords of a wind-harp. She felt herself pleasantly swayed and breathed upon; it was as if an atmosphere were around her in which she felt a perfect ease and freedom, an assurance that her lightest word might launch forth safely, as a tiny boat, on the smooth, glassy mirror of her listener's pleased attention.

«I came to Newport only on a visit of business,» he said, after a few moments of introductory conversation. «I was not prepared for its many attractions.»

«Newport has a great deal of beautiful scenery,» said Mary.

«I have heard that it was celebrated for the beauty of its scenery, and of its ladies,» he answered; «but,» he added, with a quick flash of his dark eye, «I never realized the fact before.»

The glance of the eye pointed and limited the compliment, and at the same time there was a wary shrewdness in it: he was measuring how deep his shaft had sunk, as he always instinctively measured the person he talked with.

Mary had been told of her beauty since her childhood, notwithstanding her mother had essayed all that transparent, respectable hoaxing by which discreet mothers endeavor to blind their daughters to the real facts of such cases: but in her own calm, balanced mind, she had accepted what she was so often told, as a quiet verity; and therefore she neither fluttered nor blushed on this occasion, but regarded the speaker with a pleased attention, as one who was saying obliging things.

«Cool!» he thought to himself; «hum! a little rustic belle, I suppose,—well aware of her own value; rather piquant, on my word!»

«Shall we walk in the garden?» he said: «the evening is so beautiful.»

They passed out of the door and began promenading the long walk. At the bottom of the alley he stopped, and turning, looked up the vista of box ending in the brilliantly lighted rooms where gentlemen with powdered heads, lace ruffles, and glittering knee-buckles were handing ladies in stiff brocades, whose towering heads were shaded by ostrich feathers and sparkling with gems.

«Quite court-like, on my word!» he said. «Tell me, do you often have such brilliant entertainments as this?»

«I suppose they do,» said Mary. «I never was at one before, but I sometimes hear of them.»

«And *you* do not attend?» said the gentleman, with an accent which made the inquiry a marked compliment.

«No, I do not,» said Mary: «these people generally do not visit us.»

«What a pity,» he said, «that their parties should want such an ornament! But,» he added, «this night must make them aware of their oversight; if you are not always in society after this, it will surely not be for want of solicitation.»

«You are very kind to think so,» replied Mary; «but even if it were to be so, I should not see my way clear to be often in such scenes as this.»

Her companion looked at her with a glance a little doubtful and amused, and said, «And pray why not? if the inquiry be not too presumptuous.»

«Because,» said Mary, «I should be afraid they would take too much time and thought, and lead me to forget the great object of life.»

The simple gravity with which this was said, as if quite assured of the sympathy of her auditor, appeared to give him a secret amusement. His bright, dark eyes danced, as if he suppressed some quick repartee; but drooping his long lashes deferentially, he said in gentle tones, «I should like to know what so beautiful a young lady considers the great object of life.»

Mary answered reverentially, in those words then familiar from infancy to every Puritan child, « To glorify God, and enjoy him forever.»

«*Really?*» he said, looking straight into her eyes with that penetrating glance with which he was accustomed to take the gauge of every one with whom he conversed.

«Is it *not?*» said Mary, looking back, calm and firm, into the sparkling, restless depths of his eyes.

At that moment, two souls, going with the whole force of their being in opposite directions, looked out of their windows at each other with a fixed and earnest recognition.

Burr was practiced in every art of gallantry; he had made womankind a study; he never saw a beautiful face and form without a sort of restless desire to experiment upon it and try his power over the interior inhabitant: but just at this moment, something streamed into his soul from those blue, earnest eyes, which brought back to his mind what pious people had so often told him of his mother, the beautiful and early-sainted Esther Burr. He was one of those persons who systematically managed and played upon himself and others, as a skillful musician on an instrument. Yet one secret of his fascination was the naïveté with which, at certain moments, he would abandon himself to some little impulse of a nature originally sensitive and tender. Had the strain of feeling which now awoke in him come over him elsewhere, he would have shut down some spring in his mind and excluded it in a moment: but talking with a beautiful creature whom he wished to please, he gave way at once to the emotion; real tears stood in his fine eyes, and he raised Mary's hand to his lips and kissed it, saying:—

«Thank you, my beautiful child, for so good a thought. It is truly a noble sentiment, though practicable only to those gifted with angelic natures.»

«Oh, I trust not,» said Mary, earnestly touched and wrought upon, more than she herself knew, by the beautiful eyes, the modulated voice, the charm of manner, which seemed to enfold her like an Italian summer.

Burr sighed,—a real sigh of his better nature, but passed out with all the more freedom that he felt it would interest his fair companion, who, for the time being, was the one woman of the world to him.

«Pure and artless souls like yours,» he said, «cannot measure the temptations of those who are called to the real battle of life in a world like this. How many nobler aspirations fall withered in the fierce heat and struggle of the conflict!»

He was saying then what he really felt, often bitterly felt,—but *using* this real feeling advisedly, and with skillful tact, for the purpose of the hour.

What was this purpose? To win the regard, the esteem, the tenderness of a religious, exalted nature shrined in a beautiful form; to gain and hold ascendency. It was a lifelong habit; one of those forms of refined self-indulgence which he pursued, thoughtless and reckless of consequences. He had found now the keynote of the character: it was a beautiful instrument, and he was well pleased to play on it.

«I think, sir,» said Mary, modestly, «that you forget the great provision made for our weakness.»

«How?» he said.

«They that *wait on the Lord* shall renew their strength,» she replied gently.

He looked at her as she spoke these words, with a pleased, artistic perception of the contrast between her worldly attire and the simple, religious earnestness of her words.

«She is entrancing!» he thought to himself; «so altogether fresh and naïve!»

«My sweet saint,» he said, «such as you are the appointed guardians of us coarser beings. The prayers of souls given up to worldliness and ambition effect little. You must intercede for us. I am very orthodox, you see,» he added with that subtle smile which sometimes irradiated his features. «I am fully aware of all that your reverend doctor tells you of the worthlessness of unregenerate doings; and so when I see angels walking below, I try to secure a 'friend at court.'»

He saw that Mary looked embarrassed and pained at this banter, and therefore added with a delicate shading of earnestness:—

«In truth, my fair young friend, I hope you *will* sometimes pray for me. I am sure, if I have any chance of good, it will come in such a way.»

«Indeed I will,» said Mary fervently,—her little heart full, tears in her eyes, her breath coming quick,—and she added with a deepening color, «I am sure, Mr. Burr, that there should be a covenant blessing for you if for any one, for you are the son of a holy ancestry.»

A SPIRITUAL LOVE

From ‹The Minister's Wooing›

What Mary loved so passionately, that which came between her and God in every prayer, was not the gay young dashing sailor,—sudden in anger, imprudent of speech, and though generous in heart, yet worldly in plans and schemings,—but her own ideal of a grand and noble man; such a man as she thought he might become. He stood glorified before her: an image of the strength that overcomes things physical, of the power of command which controls men and circumstances, of the courage which disdains fear, of the honor which cannot lie, of constancy which knows no shadow of turning, of tenderness which protects the weak, and lastly, of religious loyalty which should lay the golden crown of its perfected manhood at the feet of a Sovereign Lord and Redeemer. This was the man she loved, and with this regal mantle of glories she invested the person called James Marvyn; and all that she saw and felt to be wanting she prayed for with the faith of a believing woman.

Nor was she wrong; for as to every leaf and every flower there is an ideal to which the growth of the plant is constantly urging, so is there an ideal to every human being,—a perfect form in which it might appear, were every defect removed and every characteristic excellence stimulated to the highest point. Once in an age, God sends to some of us a friend who loves in us *not* a false imagining, an unreal character, but looking through all the rubbish of our imperfections, loves in us the divine ideal of our nature,—loves, not the man that we are, but the angel that we may be. Such friends seem inspired by a divine gift of prophecy,—like the mother of St. Augustine, who, in the midst of the wayward, reckless youth of her son, beheld him in a vision, standing, clothed in white, a ministering priest at the right hand of God; as he has stood for long ages since. Could the mysterious foresight unveil to us this resurrection form of the friends with whom we daily walk, compassed about with mortal infirmity, we should follow them with faith and reverence through all the disguises of human faults and weaknesses, «waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God.»

MISS PRISSY TAKES CANDACE'S COUNSEL

From ‹The Minister's Wooing›

Candace sat on a fragment of granite bowlder which lay there, her black face relieved against a clump of yellow mulleins, then in majestic altitude. On her lap was spread a checked pocket-handkerchief, containing rich slices of cheese and a store of her favorite brown doughnuts.

«Now, Miss Prissy,» she said, «dar's *reason* in all tings, an' a good deal *more* in some tings dan dar is in oders. Dar's a good deal more reason in two young, handsome folks comin' togeder dan dar is in» — Candace finished the sentence by an emphatic flourish of her doughnut. «Now as long as eberybody thought Jim Marvyn was dead, dar wa'n't nothin' else in de world *to* be done *but* marry de doctor. But good lan'! I hearn him a-talkin' to Miss Marvyn las' night: it kinder 'mos' broke my heart. Why, dem two poor creeturs, dey's jest as onhappy 's dey can be! An' she's got too much feelin' for de doctor to say a word; and *I* say *he oughter to be told on 't!* dat's what *I* say,» said Candace, giving a decisive bite to her doughnut.

«I say so too,» said Miss Prissy. «Why, I never had such bad feelings in my life as I did yesterday, when that young man came down to our house. He was just as pale as a cloth. I tried to say a word to Miss Scudder, but she snapped me up so! She's an awful decided woman when her mind's made up. I was telling Cerinthy Ann Twitchel,— she came round me this noon,— that it didn't exactly seem to me right that things should go on as they are going. And says I, ‹Cerinthy Ann, I don't know anything what to do.› And says she, ‹If I was you, I know what *I'd* do,— I'd tell the doctor,› says she. ‹Nobody ever takes offense at anything *you* do, Miss Prissy.› To be sure,» added Miss Prissy, «I have talked to people about a good many things that it's rather strange I should; 'cause I ain't one, somehow, that can let things go that seem to want doing. I always told folks that I should spoil a novel before it got half-way through the first volume, by blurting out some of those things that they let go trailing on so, till everybody gets so mixed up they don't know what they're doing.»

«Well, now, honey,» said Candace authoritatively, «ef you's got any notions o' dat kind, I tink it mus' come from de good

Lord, an' I 'dvise you to be 'tendin' to 't right away. You jes' go 'long an' tell de doctor yourself all you know, an' den le's see what 'll come on 't. I tell you, I b'liebe it'll be one o' de bes' day's works you eber did in your life!"

"Well," said Miss Prissy, "I guess to-night, before I go to bed, I'll make a dive at him. When a thing's once out, it's out, and can 't be got in again, even if people don't like it; and that's a mercy, anyhow. It really makes me feel 'most wicked to think of it, for he is the most blessedest man!"

"Dat's what he *is*," said Candace. "But de blessedest man in de world oughter know de truth: dat's what *I* tink!"

"Yes — true enough!" said Miss Prissy. "I'll tell him, anyway!"

Miss Prissy was as good as her word; for that evening, when the doctor had retired to his study, she took her life in her hand, and walking swiftly as a cat, tapped rather timidly at the study-door, which the doctor opening, said benignantly: —

"Ah, Miss Prissy!"

"If you please, sir," said Miss Prissy, "I'd like a little conversation."

The doctor was well enough used to such requests from the female members of his church, which generally were the prelude to some disclosures of internal difficulties or spiritual experiences. He therefore graciously motioned her to a chair.

"I thought I must come in," she began, busily twirling a bit of her Sunday gown. "I thought — that is — I felt it my duty — I thought — perhaps — I ought to tell you — that perhaps you ought to know — "

The doctor looked civilly concerned. He did not know but Miss Prissy's wits were taking leave of her. He replied, however, with his usual honest stateliness: —

"I trust, dear madam, that you will feel at perfect freedom to open to me any exercises of mind that you may have."

"It isn't about myself," said Miss Prissy. "If you please, it's about you and Mary!"

The doctor *now* looked awake in right earnest, and very much astonished besides; and he looked eagerly at Miss Prissy, to have her go on.

"I don't know how you would view such a matter," said Miss Prissy; "but the fact is that James Marvyn and Mary always did love each other, ever since they were children."

Still the doctor was unawakened to the real meaning of the words, and he answered simply:—

«I should be far from wishing to interfere with so very natural and universal a sentiment, which I make no doubt is all quite as it should be.»

«No—but—» said Miss Prissy, «you don't understand what I mean. I mean that James Marvyn wanted to marry Mary, and that she was—well—she wasn't engaged to him, but—»

«Madam!» said the doctor, in a voice that frightened Miss Prissy out of her chair, while a blaze like sheet-lightning shot from his eyes, and his face flushed crimson.

«Mercy on us! Doctor, I hope you'll excuse me; but there—the fact is—I've said it out—the fact is, they wa'n't engaged: but that Mary loved him ever since he was a boy, as she never will and never can love any man again in this world, is what I am just as sure of as that I'm standing here; and I've felt you ought to know it, 'cause I'm quite sure that if he'd been alive, she'd never given the promise she has—the promise that she means to keep, if her heart breaks and his too. The' wouldn't anybody tell you, and I thought I must tell you; 'cause I thought you'd know what was right to do about it.»

During all this latter speech the Doctor was standing with his back to Miss Prissy, and his face to the window, just as he did some time before, when Mrs. Scudder came to tell him of Mary's consent. He made a gesture backward, without speaking, that she should leave the apartment: and Miss Prissy left, with a guilty kind of feeling as if she had been striking a knife into her pastor; and rushing distractedly across the entry into Mary's little bedroom, she bolted the door, threw herself on the bed, and began to cry.

«Well, I've done it!» she said to herself. «He's a very strong, hearty man,» she soliloquized, «so I hope it won't put him in a consumption: men do go into a consumption about such things sometimes. I remember Abner Seaforth did; but then he was always narrow-chested, and had the liver complaint or something. I don't know what Miss Scudder will say; —but I've done it. Poor man! such a good man, too! I declare, I feel just like Herod taking off John the Baptist's head. Well, well! it's done, and can't be helped.»

Just at this moment Miss Prissy heard a gentle tap at the door, and started as if it had been a ghost,—not being able to rid herself of the impression that somehow she had committed a great crime, for which retribution was knocking at the door.

It was Mary, who said in her sweetest and most natural tones, "Miss Prissy, the doctor would like to see you."

Mary was much astonished at the frightened, discomposed manner with which Miss Prissy received this announcement, and said:—

"I'm afraid I've waked you up out of sleep. I don't think there's the least hurry."

Miss Prissy didn't, either: but she reflected afterwards that she might as well get through with it at once; and therefore smoothing her tumbled cap-border, she went to the doctor's study. This time he was quite composed, and received her with a mournful gravity, and requested her to be seated.

"I beg, madam," he said, "you will excuse the abruptness of my manner in our late interview. I was so little prepared for the communication you had to make, that I was perhaps unsuitably discomposed. Will you allow me to ask whether you were requested by any of the parties to communicate to me what you did?"

"No, sir," said Miss Prissy.

"Have any of the parties ever communicated with you on the subject at all?" said the doctor.

"No, sir," said Miss Prissy.

"That is all," said the doctor. "I will not detain you. I am very much obliged to you, madam."

He rose, and opened the door for her to pass out; and Miss Prissy, overawed by the stately gravity of his manner, went out in silence.

THE MINISTER'S SACRIFICE

From 'The Minister's Wooing'

When Miss Prissy left the room, the doctor sat down by the table and covered his face with his hands. He had a large, passionate, determined nature; and he had just come to one of those cruel crises in life in which it is apt to seem to us that the whole force of our being, all that we can hope, wish, feel, enjoy, has been suffered to gather itself into one great wave, only to break upon some cold rock of inevitable fate, and go back, moaning, into emptiness.

In such hours men and women have cursed God and life, and thrown violently down and trampled under their feet what yet was left of life's blessings, in the fierce bitterness of despair. « This, or nothing! » the soul shrieks in her frenzy. At just such points as these, men have plunged into intemperance and wild excess; they have gone to be shot down in battle; they have broken life and thrown it away like an empty goblet, and gone like wailing ghosts out into the dread unknown.

The possibility of all this lay in that heart which had just received that stunning blow. Exercised and disciplined as he had been by years of sacrifice, by constant, unsleeping self-vigilance, there was rising there in that great heart an ocean tempest of passion; and for a while his cries unto God seemed as empty and as vague as the screams of birds tossed and buffeted in the clouds of mighty tempests.

The will that he thought wholly subdued seemed to rise under him as a rebellious giant. A few hours before, he thought himself established in an invincible submission to God's will that nothing could shake. Now he looked into himself as into a seething vortex of rebellion; and against all the passionate cries of his lower nature, could, in the language of an old saint, cling to God only by the naked force of his will. That will rested unmelted amid the boiling sea of passion, waiting its hour of renewed sway. He walked the room for hours; and then sat down to his Bible, and roused once or twice to find his head leaning on its pages, and his mind far gone in thoughts from which he woke with a bitter throb. Then he determined to set himself to some definite work; and taking his Concordance, began busily tracing out and numbering all the proof-texts for one of the chapters of his theological system,— till at last he worked himself down to such calmness that he could pray: and then he schooled and reasoned with himself, in a style not unlike, in its spirit, to that in which a great modern author has addressed suffering humanity:—

« What is it that thou art fretting and self-tormenting about? Is it because thou art not happy? Who told thee that thou wast to be happy? Is there any ordinance of the universe that thou shouldst be happy? Art thou nothing but a vulture screaming for prey? Canst thou not do without happiness? Yea, thou canst do without happiness, and instead thereof find blessedness.»

The doctor came lastly to the conclusion that blessedness, which was all the portion his Master had on earth, might do for him also; and therefore he kissed and blessed that silver dove of happiness which he saw was weary of sailing in his clumsy old ark, and let it go out of his hand without a tear.

He slept little that night: but when he came to breakfast, all noticed an unusual gentleness and benignity of manner; and Mary, she knew not why, saw tears rising in his eyes when he looked at her.

DAVID FRIEDRICH STRAUSS

(1808-1874)

The German renaissance, which had its beginnings in that great literary movement of which Goethe was the central figure, was destined to express itself at a later period in an output of philosophical and religious thought almost without parallel in its comprehensiveness and in its subtlety. Like other manifestations of intellectual and spiritual vigor, it was not without its negative and destructive principle: a principle which found, perhaps, its most significant expression in the life and work of David Friedrich Strauss,—a man modern only in the letter of what he performed; in the spirit a dogmatist of almost mediæval intensity and narrowness.

D. F. Strauss

He was born at Ludwigsburg, near Stuttgart, January 27th, 1808. His father, although a tailor by trade, devoted much of his time to literary pursuits; his mother was a woman of strong common-sense, whose piety was of an extremely practical character. The son inherited his father's taste for books, his mother's distaste of mysticism. Being designed for the church, he was sent in his thirteenth year to an evangelical seminary at Blaubeuren near Ulm, to study theology. Two of his teachers there, Professors Kern and F. C. Baur, were to have a deep influence upon his life. There also he met Christian Märklin, a student whose biography he was afterwards to write. Four years later, in 1825, he entered the University of Tübingen; but finding in the curriculum little nourishment, he sought satisfaction for his needs in Schelling's pantheistic philosophy, and in the writings of the romanticists, Jacob Böhme, and others.

In 1826 Professors Baur and Kern came to the University, resuming the intellectual oversight of their former pupils, Strauss and Märklin. Baur introduced Strauss to the works of Schleiermacher, whose mystical conception of religion, as having its roots in the emotional life, was for a time attractive to the future author of the

'Leben Jesu,' drawing him away from the influence of the rational philosophy of Kant and the pantheism of Schelling. But he was not to remain long a disciple of Schleiermacher. His own temperament, as well as outside forces, was drawing him to the consideration of the overwhelming Hegelian philosophy. In the last year at Tübingen he read Hegel's 'Phänomenologie,'—strong meat even for a German youth to digest. Hegel, in direct opposition to Schleiermacher, sought the roots of religion in thought, not feeling: his conception of *Begriff* and *Vorstellung*, of Notion and Representation, the Absolute, and the finite presentation of the Absolute, was to exert a tremendous influence upon Strauss; leading him at last to the inquiry embodied in the 'Life of Jesus,' how much of dogmatic religion is but the shadowing forth, the *vorstellung*, of great underlying truths.

He was not at once, however, to apply the Hegelian philosophy to the doctrines of the Christian religion. In 1830 he passed his examination with honor, becoming soon after assistant to a country clergyman; but a man of his restless and eager intellect could not long remain in the quiet atmosphere of a country parish. In 1831 he resigned his pastorate, to study under Schleiermacher and Hegel in the University of Berlin. The latter dying suddenly, shortly after Strauss's coming to Berlin, he removed to Tübingen, where he became a repetent or assistant professor, lecturing upon logic, history of philosophy, and history of ethics. In 1833 he resigned this position to devote himself to writing the 'Life of Jesus.' In 1834 the first volume, and in 1835 the second volume, was published.

In the 'Life of Jesus,' Strauss attempted to apply the Hegelian philosophy to the dogmatic system of the Christian religion: or rather, influenced by the Hegelian principle that the Absolute is expressed in finite terms, he attempted to show that the miraculous elements in the life of Jesus were ideally but not historically true; that the immaculate conception, the transfiguration, the resurrection, the ascension into heaven, were symbols of profound truth, myths created out of the Messianic hopes of the followers of Christ. This mythical theory was directly in the face of the theory of the deists, that the miraculous events in Christ's life were proof of the fallibility of the evangelists; and in the face of the theory of the rationalists, that those events were capable of natural explanation. The mythical theory of Strauss was not original with him. It had been applied to certain parts of the Old Testament by Eichhorn, Bauer, and others; in the secular domain, it was being applied by Niebuhr to early Roman history, and by Wolff to the Homeric poems: but no one before Strauss had applied it to the four Gospels thoroughly and exhaustively,—thoroughly and exhaustively, however, only in so far that Strauss never lost sight of his theory for one moment, bending everything to its shape. Of the critical study of the gospels in the modern sense Strauss knew little,— his dogmatic temper being impatient of the restraints of scholarship; added to that, a certain irreverence of temperament prevented him not only from appreciation of the essential in Christianity, but by a kind of paradox, from arriving at anything like scientific truth. He disproved everything but proved nothing. The Jesus of Strauss's 'Life' is not even a historical personage like the Jesus of Renan's 'Life'; but a faint shadow, just discerned through dead mists of theory. The great work was to have but a negative mission: it prepared the way by its blankness for positive scholarship, for positive criticism; it is the reflection of the colorless mood of one standing between two worlds, without the spiritual insight necessary to understand that between the old order and the new there must be an organic link, else both will perish.

The replies to the 'Leben Jesu,' by Neander, Ullmann, Schweizer, and others, led to a reply from Strauss in 1837. In 1839 a third edition of the work appeared, in which concessions were made to the critics, to be withdrawn in the edition of 1840, of which George Eliot made an English translation. In the same year 'Christliche Glaubenslehre,' a history of Christian doctrines in their disintegration, appeared. Strauss meanwhile had been elected to the chair of theology in the University of Zurich, but the opposition this appointment aroused led to its annulment. In 1842 he married Agnes Schebest, an opera singer, with whom he lived until their separation in 1847, and who bore him three children. In 1847 he published a satire, in which he drew a parallel between Julian the Apostate and Frederick William IV. of Prussia. In 1848 he was nominated a member of the Frankfort Parliament, but was defeated; was elected to the Würtemberg Chamber, but his constituents asked him to resign because of his conservative action.

In 1849 he began to publish those biographies which contribute most directly to his literary fame. The 'Life of Schubart' was followed by the 'Life of Christian Märklin,' in 1851; the 'Life of Frischlin,' in 1855; and the 'Life of Ulrich von Hutten,' 1858–60. In 1862 appeared the 'Life of Reimarus'; in 1877, 'A Life of Jesus for the German People,'— in substance much like the former 'Life.' Previous to its publication, 'The Christ of Dogma and the Jesus of History' had appeared in 1865. In 1872 Strauss took up his residence at Darmstadt, where he made the acquaintance of the Princess Alice and the Crown Princess of Germany, who befriended him, and before whom he lectured on Voltaire. In 1870 these lectures were published; in the same year occurred his correspondence with Renan on the subject of the Franco-Prussian War,— a correspondence which led to the severing of their friendship.

In 1872 appeared 'The Old Faith and the New.' It is this work rather than the 'Life of Jesus' which is a monument of destructive criticism; although it is less scholarly and more superficial, written with a certain indifference, as if even a once stimulating subject had become wearisome. The book is without light or heat. Its author had drifted away from all philosophy, whether of Hegel or Schelling or Schleiermacher; had cast anchor in a port of No-man's-land. To his intellect at least, God and the soul of man had become unreal. Yet he was perhaps not wholly satisfied with the aridity of his choice. The last picture of him is of an old man in hired lodgings, reading in the days before his death the 'Phædo' of Plato. He died in February 1874.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF GRÆCO-ROMAN CULTIVATION

From 'A New Life of Jesus'

In opposition to the religious tendency of the Jewish people, all the efforts of the Greeks were applied to the perfecting of the really human element in man. This position does not, speaking generally, require any proof; as in the politics and morals, in the poetry and fine arts, of that people, it lies before us as a recognized fact. But in their religion it shows itself in the resemblance of the Greek gods to men. The Indian, the Egyptian, the Assyrian, did not shape their divinities in purely human form. And the cause of this was not merely deficiency in artistic skill and taste, but above all, the fact that these nations did not conceive of their gods as being simply human. Whether the Greek obtained his divinities in part from abroad, or from native predecessors, the peculiar change which he as a Greek in every instance set about making, is this: that he converted the original *natural* symbolism into a relation of human life; made them, instead of types of cosmical powers, representatives of the powers of the human mind and social institutions; and in connection with this, approximated their outward form more completely to the human.

Now, a piety which produced human ideals in god-like forms — in those of an Apollo, an Athene, a Zeus — stands indisputably higher than that which had not divested its divinities externally of the form of beasts, and internally of the wild creating or destroying power of nature; but the human element in the Greek gods had,— corresponding to its original natural signification, as well as to the state of the cultivation of the popular mind at the time when these imaginations were realized in form,—together with its moral side, so strongly marked a sensual side, that as soon as the moral ideas were enlightened, offense could not fail to be taken at the cruelties of a Kronos, the adulteries of a Zeus, the pilferings of a Hermes, etc. Hence the poets of the later period endeavored to give a moral coloring to the myths that offended them: but there were individual philosophers of an earlier time — above all Xenophanes, the founder of the Eleatic school — who rejected the unworthy and in general human conceptions of the gods, as they were represented by Homer and Hesiod; and as is well known, it was on this ground that Plato banished Homer from his ideal republic. But even independently of this moral stumbling-block, the plurality of gods was soon discovered to be irreconcilable with the idea of the Divine nature; which, as the most perfect possible and the supreme cause of everything, could be only one and indivisible: and thus, among educated Greeks, we see Polytheism continually more and more displaced by the conception of Monotheism, or at all events reconciled with it by a stricter subordination of separate divinities to one supreme God. Thus in this respect the Greek gradually raised himself to the point of view on which the Hebrew stood from the first; and in so far as the former had attained to his conception of the one God by the philosophical method, that conception, in its later contact with Jewish Monotheism, might be of special service to the latter in the way of purifying it from many anthropomorphic features which still clung to it in the writings of the Old Testament.

But in all this the Greek formed his conceptions of man, his nature and his duties, far in advance of those ideal gods in Homer; and in a manner that never would have been possible on Jewish soil. «Humanitarianism,» says Welcker, «could never have issued from Hebrew supranaturalism; for in proportion as the apprehension is earnest and exalted, must the authority and the law of the one God and Lord suppress that human religious freedom out of which all power and cheerfulness is derived in the best and noblest form.» It was precisely because the Divinity did not confront the Greek in the form of a commanding law, that the Greek was compelled to be a law to himself; because he did not, like the Jew, see his whole life ordered for him, step by step, by religious ordinance, he was compelled to seek for a moral rule within his own mind. That this was a difficult problem, that the way to the solution of it led over dangerous ground, we see by the corruption of morals which broke in over the Greek nation after the most brilliant and flourishing age, by the arbitrary manner in which the contemporary Sophists confounded all moral notions. To them, according to the maxim of Protagoras, man was the measure of all things: nothing was naturally good or bad, but only by reason of an arbitrary rule of men, to which the individual need not bind himself; but as the authors of those rules established them for their own advantage, it was open to the individual to call good and put in practice whatever was agreeable or useful to himself. The art of justifying such conduct argumentatively, of shaking the foundations of all existing principles in religion and morals, «of strengthening the weaker cause,»—*i. e.*, of making right of wrong,—was taught and published by the Sophists; but in point of fact, all that they did was to put into a methodical form what all the world around them was practicing already.

It is well known how this moral license among the people of Greece, and the sophistical palliation of it, was resisted by Socrates. He could not, like a Hebrew prophet, refer to a written law of God,—which indeed in the case of his fellow-countrymen, long before moved to religious skepticism, would have done no good; like the opponents, therefore, whom he endeavored to combat, he kept to man: to him too, in a certain sense, man was the measure of all things; but not man in so far as he follows his own caprice or pleasure, but in so far as he seeks in earnest to know himself, and by well-regulated thought to come to an understanding with himself as to what contributes to his own true happiness. He who acts upon such true knowledge will on all occasions act right; and this right conduct will ever make man happy: this was the condensed substance of the moral system of Socrates, for the establishment of which he required no divine command; although he delivered very pure notions respecting the nature of God, in the sense of the reconciliation alluded to above of the national Polytheism with a rational Monotheism. That Socrates delivered these doctrines not scholastically in an exclusive circle, but publicly and as it were socially; that moreover, as an exalted example, he at the same time practiced what he taught, in his own life and conduct; that lastly he became a martyr to his convictions,— to his efforts, misunderstood by the mass of his fellow-citizens, for spiritual and moral elevation,— all this gives him a resemblance to Christ which has always been observed: in fact, notwithstanding the wide difference occasioned by the opposition between the systems of the nations and the religions on both sides, there is not in the whole of antiquity previous to Christianity, that of the Hebrews not excepted, any figure to be found so closely resembling Christ as that of Socrates.

After Socrates, no Greek did more to raise the tone of Greek cultivation to a point at which it might come into contact with the religion of the Hebrews, consequently towards the preparation for Christianity, than his disciple Plato. According to him, Ideas constituted all that was true in things; *i. e.*, general notions of them, which he considered to be not mere conceptions in the minds of men, but real supersensuous existences. The highest idea is that of the Good, and this identical with God himself: and when Plato calls Ideas also Gods, we see in this the possibility of a reconciliation of his philosophy on the one hand with the Polytheism of his countrymen, on the other with the Monotheism of the Jews; for Ideas, which in the former case might be looked upon as subordinate gods or demons, might in the latter be looked upon as angels, and be subordinated to the supreme Idea as to the one God. Plato declares the external world to have arisen from an amalgamation of reason with unreason, from the entrance of Ideas into their opposite (which accordingly was called matter, but which Plato described more negatively as the non-existent, without form and definiteness): in connection with this, in the language of the mysteries, he calls the human body the fetter and prison of the soul, into which it sunk out of an earlier disembodied state of pure contemplation of Ideas; and he considers the utmost possible release of the soul from the body as the problem which philosophy has to solve. In all this we recognize at once the points of contact with the views of the Essenes and the Gnostic speculations, in the form in which they appeared early in the Christian Church; but the main central principle — that of considering not the visible but the invisible as the truly Existent, not this life but the future as the true Life — has so much connection with Christianity that we cannot but recognize in this principle a preparation for it, or of mankind for it, on the part of the Greeks. Lastly, Plato does not, as Socrates did, consider virtue as the only true means for attaining happiness, but makes happiness to consist in virtue as the right condition — harmony and health — of the soul; and in doing so he makes virtue, in so far as it has its reward in itself, independent of all pure motives, even of a regard to future recompense,— which nevertheless he emphatically inculcates. Thus he raised the idea of virtue as much above the Christian idea of it, as the point of view of the genuine philosopher is in comparison with the ordinary religious point of view; and only the foremost of the Christian teachers have in this respect come near to Plato.

In everything that was essential, Aristotle remained true to Plato's exalted theory of man's moral object; only that, in accordance with his tendency to outward experience, he laid more stress upon external good and evil as possible helps or obstacles to moral effort. The school of the Stoics, in part from a motive of mere opposition to the less strict principles of the Peripatetic School founded by Aristotle, took as the main foundation of their moral doctrine the self-sufficiency of virtue, its power to make men happy in itself alone, the worthlessness of everything external to it. According to the Stoic doctrine, virtue is to be considered the only good, vice the only evil; all other things, however powerful their influence may be on the condition of men, come into the category of the indifferent: health and sickness, riches and poverty, nay, life and death themselves, are in themselves neither good nor bad, but solely indifferent things, which men may turn as well to good as to evil. Here the connection with the later Christian point of view and its indifference to external circumstances cannot be overlooked: and when the Stoic philosophy places its wise man, as a being perfect, absolutely without wants and godlike, upon an elevation apparently irreconcilable with Christian humility, this elevation is again compensated when the superiority of the wise man is stated to consist only in his having put himself in accordance with the law of the universe, and adapted himself to the general reason of the world; and resignation to destiny as the will of God, the subordination of the individual will to the will of the Divinity, is preached by the Stoics in a manner which at once reminds us of the precepts of Christ.

Again, there was still another point of view in which Stoicism prepared the way for Christianity. The mode of thought that prevailed in antiquity, not merely among the Jews, but also among the Greeks and Romans, was, in accordance with the isolation of the nations before the great monarchies of the world arose, exclusive, and limited to their own people. The Jew considered none but the posterity of Abraham to be the people of God; the Greek held that none but a Hellene was a genuine man, or fully entitled to be called a man at all, and with reference to the barbarian he assigned himself the same exclusive position that the Jew did to himself towards the Gentiles. Even philosophers like Plato and Aristotle had not yet quite rid themselves of the national prejudice: the Stoics were the first to draw from the community of the faculty of reason in all men the inference of the essential resemblance and connection of all.

The Stoics were the first to look upon all men as citizens of a great republic, to which all individual States stand in only the same relation as the houses of the town to the whole, as a family under the common law of reason: the Idea of Cosmopolitanism, as one of the finest fruits of the exertions of Alexander the Great, first sprung up in the Porch; nay, a Stoic was the first to speak the word that all men are brothers, all having God for their father. As regards the Idea of God, the Stoics advanced the reconciliation between the popular polytheism and philosophical monotheism on the ground of the pantheistic view of the universe, so far as to consider Zeus as the universal Spirit of the universe, the original Existence, and the other gods as portions and manifestations of him; and in doing so they did, in the Idea of the Logos, describing universal Reason as the creative power of nature, prepare a conception which was afterwards to become of the utmost importance for the dogmatic foundation of Christianity. At the same time, by the allegorical interpretation which they applied to Homer and Hesiod in order to extract physio-philosophical ideas of the gods and their histories in the Greek mythology, the Stoics pointed out to the Alexandrian Jews and subsequently to the Christians, in the study of the Old and subsequently of the New Testament, the way of substituting at their pleasure a different meaning when they did not like the literal one.

However far a theory which places the highest good in pleasure, and deprives the gods of all interference with the world and mankind, appears to be moved from the line of spiritual development which helped to prepare the way for Christianity,— still, even in Epicureanism, traits are not wanting that bear some resemblance to it. In the first place, it is especially true in philosophy that the most opposite tendencies come in contact when thoroughly carried out; and thus the highest Good of the Epicurean is not so far from that of the Stoic as might appear at first sight. For by that pleasure in which he places the highest Good, the Epicurean does not understand the highest sensual enjoyment, but an abiding tranquil state of mind, which requires the renunciation of much transitory enjoyment, the acceptance of much incidental pain; and the Epicurean tranquillity is closely connected with the Stoic apathy. It is true indeed that the virtue of the Epicurean is never an object in and for itself, nor ever anything but a means for attaining that happiness which is separate from it; but still the means are so indispensable and so sufficient, that he can neither conceive virtue without happiness nor happiness without virtue. And though the Epicureans were not so prudish as the Stoics with regard to the outward good things of life, still they pointed to the simplicity of men's real wants, and to the advantage of keeping within the bounds of these wants, conversely also to the mode in which pain and misery may be conquered by the exercise of reason and coolness. In this the Epicureans, by their passive process, approached very nearly to the same point as the Stoics did by their active; and towards the latter they stood in a supplementary relation in those points in which Stoic severity became harshness and want of feeling. The Porch would know nothing of compassion and indulgence; Epicurus advised mercy and pardon, and the Epicurean principle, that it is better to confer a benefit than to receive one, corresponds exactly to the precept of Jesus, that to give is more blessed than to receive.

It was from the opposition and combat between these schools of Greek philosophy, of which the one regularly denied what the other maintained, the one thought it could refute what the other could maintain, that at last a doubt of all truth as capable of being known and proved — skepticism, as well philosophical as practical — developed itself. In this there seems at first sight to be a still wider separation from popular religious faith than had been before involved in men's applying themselves to philosophy. Still, the breaking of the last supports which human consciousness sought in philosophy might make that consciousness even more ready to receive a fresh supposed revelation of the Divine. The increase of superstition, the recourse to secret mysteries and novel forms of worship, which were to bring man into immediate contact with the Divinity, such as may be noticed about the time of the rise of Christianity even among the more cultivated classes of the Græco-Roman world, was the result of the fact that not merely the old religions now failed to give mankind the satisfaction which they sought for, but the existing philosophical systems also failed to do so. It is well known how in the third century after Christ the so-called Neo-Platonic philosophy sprang out of this unsatisfied want; but even in the last century before Christ we remark a precedent to this tendency in the same Neo-Pythagoreanism to which we ascribed, above, an influence upon the Therapeutico-Essenic sect among the Jews. If then such a want of a new method of contact with the Divine, a new bond between heaven and earth, was felt in the spirit of that time, and felt among the Jews as well as among the Gentiles, Christianity takes its place as one of a series of attempts to satisfy that want; and the recognition that it met with is explained from the fact that it had the power of satisfying it in a more catholic and original manner than the artificially invented systems of Neo-Pythagoreanism and Neo-Platonism, or the secret league of the Therapeuts and Essenes.

If now, as compared with what the Greeks did to prepare the way for Christianity, we attempt to describe the assistance which the Roman people rendered, we may refer this assistance to two points. The first is the unity of one great Empire within which, even in the century before the birth of Christ, they had comprised all the known nations of the ancient world. In this Alexander had preceded them; but his kingdom, which besides did not comprise the real West, had not continued to exist as a unity, but had fallen into several pieces, among which there was never a complete cessation from a bloody struggle. It was impossible that the idea of Cosmopolitanism — the contemplation of man as man, and no longer merely as Greek, Jew, etc., etc.— could strike deep root until it did so in the Roman Empire of the world; so also it was necessary for the numerous and separate divinities of tribes and nations to unite and mix in this great communion of peoples, before the conceptions of them could resolve themselves into that of the one supreme and only God, the religions of the nations into a religion of the world. And with this change the spiritualization of religion was immediately connected. The One God could not be a material God, and for the God of all nations the usages were no longer suited by which this or that people had been accustomed to worship its own God. Christianity having once arisen, was enabled to spread rapidly and unimpeded by means of the closer connection which the Roman rule had established by assimilation of education and institutions, as well as by the facilitation of intercourse between separate nations and countries. This dissemination was but an external addition to all that preceded. The reverse side of this unity is the destruction of the happiness and comfort which one of these peoples had before enjoyed in its independence, in living according to its own laws and ancient traditions; the pressure with which the foreign yoke weighed upon them; the manifold acts of injustice to which in the later times of the Roman republic — especially during the civil war — they were obliged to submit. Men's life in this world being thus embittered, and all natural assistance against Roman oppression being at last despaired of, their minds were directed to the next world, their expectations to some miraculous succor such as that of the idea of the Jewish Messiah made them hope for, and Christianity promised after a spiritual fashion.

The other point which we may look upon as the Roman contribution towards the preparation of the way for Christianity is the practical turn of the Roman people. Even the late schools of Greek philosophy, such as the Stoic and Epicurean, had preferred applying themselves to the theory of morals; and in the hands of the Romans, who had little inclination for mere speculation or scholastic philosophizing generally, philosophy became entirely practical and popular. In the popular apprehension the opposition between different schools and systems was smoothed away. The consequence was that among the Romans especially was formed that Eclecticism, as the most famous representative of which Cicero is well known to all the world, though his real merit and importance in the history of progress has been lately overlooked; Seneca also, though he stands on Stoic ground, was not free from this Eclecticism: and in the writings of both there are found, about the One God and the consciousness of him implanted in men,— as well as about man, his Divine nature, its corruption and restoration,— thoughts and expressions the purity of which surprises us: while their resemblance to the doctrines of Christianity, especially in the case of Seneca, has given occasion to the legend of a connection between him and the Apostle Paul, though it only shows how everything on all sides at that time was pressing towards the point at which we see Christianity immediately appear.

RUTH McENERY STUART

(1856–)

Within the last ten years Ruth McEnery Stuart has become prominent among writers of dialect stories, by an originality and charm which offset the disadvantages of her being a late comer in a well-worked field. One of her earliest magazine stories, ‹Lamentations of Jeremiah Johnson,› proved that the possibilities of the dialect story were by no means exhausted. It was brightened with kindly humor; was in itself a quaint conception, having that general character of pleasantness which distinguishes Mrs. Stuart's stories, making them always readable.

‹Lamentations of Jeremiah Johnson› was followed by other stories of negro life: ‹The Golden Wedding,› ‹Lucindy,› ‹Crazy Abe,›—each told with force and naturalness, each a picture in which scenes and situations stand out by a quick succession of masterly strokes. Her characters are not subtle, but clear and sharp. To understand them, eyesight, not imagination, is required. There are more classic ways than hers of telling a story; but few are written with less effort to be brilliant at the expense of truth. Her comedy rarely degenerates into melodrama. Her pathos is never overdrawn.

Ruth McEnery Stuart

She has not confined herself altogether to tales of negro life. ‹Babette,› her only long story, is a pretty and conventional idyl of Creole life in New Orleans. The ‹Sonny› series tells of the birth and education of the child of an Arkansas planter. The stories of Simpkinsville are of life in an Arkansas village. ‹The Unlived Life of Little Mary Ellen› is a pathetic tale of old-fashioned Southern gentlefolk.

Mrs. Stuart has lived the greater part of her life among the people and scenes which she describes so well. She was born in Marksville, Aroyelles Parish, Louisiana, in 1856. In 1879 she married Mr. Alfred O. Stuart, a planter of southern Arkansas, where she learned to know the after-the-war negro of the Southern plantations,—the «new issue» negro, as he is described by his fellows of the old régime. There too she became acquainted with the country people, whose simple lives and quaint speech are recorded in her stories of Arkansas.

‹Unc' Mingo's Speculations› was Mrs. Stuart's first story. The titles of her collected works are—‹Carlotta's Intended and Other Tales,› ‹A Golden Wedding and Other Tales,› ‹Babette,› ‹Sonny,› ‹Solomon Crow's Christmas,› and ‹Pockets and Other Tales.›

THE WIDDER JOHNSING

From ‹A Golden Wedding and Other Tales.› Copyright 1893, by Harper & Brothers

«Monkey, monkey, bottle o' beer,
How many monkeys have we here?
One, two, three—
Out goes she!»

«'TAIN' no use ter try ter hol' 'er. She des gwine f'om fits ter convulsions, and f'om convulsions back inter fits!»

Sister Temperance Tias raised her hands and spoke low. She had just come out of the room of sorrow.

Jake Johnson was dead, and Lize Ann Johnson again a widow.

The «other room» in the little cabin was crowded with visitors,—the old, the young, the pious, the thoughtless, the frivolous,—all teeming with curiosity, and bursting into expressions of sympathy, each anxious to look upon the ever-interesting face of death, every one eager to «he'p hol' Sis' Lize Ann.»

But Temperance held sway on this as on all similar occasions on the plantation, and no one would dare to cross the threshold from «the other room» until she should make the formal announcement, «De corpse is perpared ter receive 'is frien's;» and even then there would be the tedium of precedence to undergo.

It was tiresome, but it paid in the end; for long before midnight, every visitor should have had his turn to pass in and take a look. Then would begin an informal, unrestricted circulation between the two rooms, when the so-disposed might «choose pardners,» and sit out on the little porch, or in the yard on benches brought in from the church, and distributed about for that purpose.

Here they would pleasantly gather about in groups with social informality, and freely discuss such newly discovered virtues of the deceased as a fresh retrospect revealed, or employ themselves with their own more pressing romances, as they saw fit.

There were many present, inside and at the doors, who eagerly anticipated this later hour, and were even now casting about for «pardners»; but Sister Temperance was not one of these. Now was the hour of her triumph. It was she alone — excepting the few, selected by herself, who were at this moment making a last toilet for the departed — who had looked upon the face of the dead.

She was even ahead of the doctors; who, as the patient had died between visits, did not yet know the news.

As she was supreme authority upon the case in all its bearings, whenever she appeared at the door between the two rooms the crowd pressed eagerly forward. They were *so* anxious for the very latest bulletin.

«F'om convulsions inter fits! Umh!» repeated the foremost sister, echoing Temperance's words.

«Yas, an' back ag'in!» reiterated the oracle. «She des come thoo a fit, an' de way she gwine orn now, I s'picion de nex' gwine be a reverind convulsion! She taken it hard, I tell yer!» And Sister Temperance quietly, cruelly closed the door, and withdrew into the scene of action.

«Sis' Lize Ann ought ter be helt,» ventured a robust sister near the door.

«Or tied, one,» added another.

«I knowed she keered mo' fur Brer Jake 'n she let orn,» suggested a third. «Lize Ann don't mean no harm by her orf-handed ways. She des kep' 'er love all ter 'erse'f.»

So ran the gossip of «the other room,» when Temperance re-appeared at the door.

«Sis' Calline Taylor, yo' services is requi'ed.» She spoke with a suppressed tone of marked distinctness and a dignity that was inimitable, whereupon a portly dame at the farthest corner of the room began to elbow her way through the crowd, who regarded her with new respect as she entered the chamber of death; a shrill scream from the new-made widow adding its glamour to her honors, as with a loud groan she closed the door behind her.

A stillness now fell upon the assembly, disturbed only by an occasional moan, until Sister Phyllis, a leader in things spiritual, broke the silence

"Sis' Calline Taylor is a proud han' ter hol' down fits, but I hope she'll speak a word in season fur sperityal comfort."

"Sis' Tempunce callin' out Scripture ev'y time she see 'er ease up," said old Black Sal. "Lize Ann in good han's, po' soul! Look like she *is* got good 'casion ter grieve. Seem like she's born ter widderhood."

"Po' Jake! Yer reck'n she gwine bury 'im 'longside o' Alick an' Steve?"—her former husbands.

"In co'se. 'Tain' no use dividin' up grief an' sowin' a pusson's sorrer broadcas', 'caze—"

The opening door commanded silence again.

"Brer Jake's face changin' mightily!" said Temperance, as she stood again before them. "De way hit's a-settlin', I b'lieve he done foun' peace ter his soul."

"Is 'is eyes shet?"

"De lef' eye open des a leetle *teen*chy *tine*chy bit."

"Look fur a chile ter die nex'—a boy chile. Yer say de lef' eye open, ain't yer?"

"Yas—de one todes de chimbly. He layin' catti-cornders o' de baid, wid 'is foots ter de top."

"Catti-cornders! Umh!"

"Yas, an' wid 'is haid down todes de foot."

"Eh, Lord! Haids er foots is all one ter po' Jake now."

"Is yer gwine plat 'is fingers, Sis' Tempunce?"

"His fingers done platted, an' de way I done twissen 'em in an' out, over an' under, dee gwine stay tell Gab'iel call fur 'is han'!"

"Umh!"

"Eh, Lord! An' is yer done comb 'is haid, Sis' Tempunce?"

"I des done wropp'n an' twissen it good, an' I 'low ter let it out fur de fun'al to-morrer. I knowed Jake 'd be mo' satisfider ef he knowed it 'd be in its fus' granjer at the fun'al—an' Sis' Lize Ann too. She say she 'ain't nuver is had no secon'-class buryin's, an' she ain' *gwine* have none. Time Alick died she lay in a trance two days, an' de brass ban' at de fun'al nuver fazed 'er! An' y' all ricollec' how she taken ter de woods an' had ter be ketched time Steve was kilt, an' now she des a-stavin' it orf brave as she kin on convulsions an' fits! Look like when a pusson taken sorrer so hard, Gord would sho'ly spare de scourgin' rod."

"Yas, but yer know what de preacher say—'Gord sen' a tempes' o' win' ter de shorn lamb.'"

"Yas indeedy," said another, a religious celebrity, "an' we daresn't jedge de Jedge!"

"Maybe sometimes Gord sen' a tempes' o' win' ter de shorn lamb ter meck it run an' hide in de Shepherd's fol'. Pray Gord dis searchin' win' o' jedgmint gwine blow po' Sis' Lize Ann inter de green pastures o' de kingdom!"

"Amen!" came solemnly from several directions.

An incisive shriek from within, which startled the speakers into another awe-stricken silence, summoned Temperance back in haste to her post.

Crowds were gathering without the doors now, and the twinkle of lanterns approaching over the fields and through the wood promised a popular attendance at the wake, which after much tedious waiting was at last formally opened. Temperance herself swung wide the dividing door, and hesitating a moment as she stood before them, that the announcement should gain in effect by a prelude of silence, she said with marked solemnity:—

"De corpse is now perpared ter receive 'is frien's! Ef," she continued, after another pause,—"ef so be any pusson present is nigh kin ter de lately deceasted daid corpse, let 'em please ter step in fust at de haid o' de line."

A half-minute of inquiring silence ensued; and that the first to break it by stepping forward was a former discarded wife of the deceased caused no comment. She led by the hand a small boy, whom all knew to be the dead man's son: and it was with distinct deference that the crowd parted to let them pass in. Just as they were entering, a stir was heard at the outer door.

"Heah comes de corpse's mammy and daddy," one said, in an audible whisper.

It was true. The old parents, who lived some miles distant, had just arrived. The throng had fallen well back now, clearing a free passage across the room. With a loud groan and extended arms, Temperance glided down the opening to meet the aged couple, who sobbed aloud as they tremulously followed her into the presence of the dead.

The former wife and awe-stricken child had already entered; and that they all, with the new-made widow, who rocked to and fro at the head of the corpse, wept together, confessed sharers in a common sorrow, was quite in the natural order of things.

The procession of guests now began to pass through, making a circuit of the table on which the body lay; and as they moved out the door, some one raised a hymn. A group in the yard caught it up, and soon the woods echoed with the weird rhythmic melody. All night long the singing continued, carried along by new recruits as the first voices grew weary and dropped out. If there was some giggling and love-making among the young people, it was discreetly kept in the shadowy corners, and wounded no one's feelings.

The widow took no rest during the night. When exhausted from violent emotion, she fell into a rhythmic moan, accompanied by corresponding swaying to and fro of her body,— a movement at once unyielding and restful.

The church folk were watching her with a keen interest, and indeed so were the worldlings; for this was Lize Ann's third widowhood within the short space of five years, and each of the other funerals had been practically but an inaugural service to a most remarkable career. As girl first, and twice as widow, she had been a conspicuous, and if truth must be told, rather a notorious figure in colored circles. Three times she had voluntarily married into quiet life, and welcomed with her chosen partner the seclusion of wedded domesticity; but during the intervals she had played promiscuous havoc with the matrimonial felicity of her neighbors, to such an extent that it was a confessed relief when she had finally walked up the aisle with Jake Johnson, as by taking one woman's husband she had brought peace of mind to a score of anxious wives.

It is true that Jake had been lawfully wedded to the first woman, but the ceremony had occurred in another parish some years before, and was practically obsolete; and so the church — taking its cue from nature, which does not set eyes in the back of one's head — made no indiscreet retrospective investigations, but in the professed guise of a peace-maker pronounced its benediction upon the new pair.

The deserted wife had soon likewise repaired her loss; whether with benefit of clergy or not, it is not ours to say, but when she returned to mourn at the funeral it was not as one who had refused to be comforted. She felt a certain secret triumph in bringing her boy to gaze for the last time upon the face of his father. It was more than the childless woman, who sat, acknowledged chief mourner, at the head of the corpse, could do.

There was a look of half-savage defiance upon her face as she lifted the little fellow up, and said in an audible voice:—

"Take one las' look at yo' daddy, Jakey. Dat's yo' own Gord-blessed father, an' you ain't nuver gwine see 'im no mo', tell yer meet 'im in de Kingdom come, whar dey ain't no marryin', neither *givin'* in marriage;» and she added, in an undertone, with a significant sniffle, «nur borryin', nuther.»

She knew that she whom it could offend would not hear this last remark, as her ears were filled with her own wails; but the words were not lost upon the crowd.

The little child, frightened and excited, began to cry aloud.

«Let him cry,» said one. «D'ain't nobody got a better right.»

«He feel his loss, po' chile!»

«Blood's thicker'n water ev'y time.»

«Yas, blood will tell. Look like de po' chile's heart was rendered in two quick 's he looked at his pa.»

Such sympathetic remarks as these, showing the direction of the ultimate sentiment of the people, reached the mother's ears, and encouraged her to raise her head a fraction higher than before, as, pacifying the weeping child, she passed out and went home.

The funeral took place on the afternoon following; and to the surprise of all, the mourning widow behaved with wonderful self-control during all the harrowing ceremony.

Only when the last clod fell upon the grave did she throw up her hands, and with a shriek fall over in a faint, and have to be «toted» back to the wagon in which she had come.

If some were curious to see what direction her grief would take, they had some time to wait. She had never before taken long to declare herself, and on each former occasion the declaration had been one of war—a worldly, rioting, rollicking war upon the men.

During both her previous widowhoods she had danced longer and higher, laughed oftener and louder, dressed more gaudily and effectively, than all the women on three contiguous plantations put together; and when, in these well-remembered days, she had passed down the road on Sunday evenings, and chosen to peep over her shoulders with dreamy half-closed eyes at some special man whom it pleased her mood to ensnare, he had no more been able to help following her than he had been able to help lying to his wife or sweetheart about it afterward.

The sympathy expressed for her at Jake's funeral had been sincere. No negro ever resists any noisy demonstration of grief, and each of her moans and screams had found responsive echo in more than one sympathetic heart.

But now the funeral was over, Jake was dead and gone, and the state of affairs so exact a restoration to a recent well-remembered condition that it was not strange that the sisters wondered with some concern what she would do.

They had felt touched when she had fainted away at the funeral; and yet there were those, and among them his good wife, who had not failed to observe that she had fallen squarely into Pete Richards's arms.

Now, every one knew that she had once led Pete a dance, and that for a time it seemed a question whether he or Jake Johnson should be the coming man.

Of course this opportune fainting might have been accidental; and it may be that Pete's mother was supercensorious when, on her return from the funeral, she had said as she lit her pipe:—

"Dat gal Lize Ann is a she-devil."

But her more discreet daughter-in-law, excepting that she thrashed the children all round, gave no sign that she was troubled.

For the first few months of her recovered widowhood Lize Ann was conspicuous only by her absence from congregations of all sorts, as well as by her mournful and persistent refusal to speak with any one on the subject of her grief, or indeed to speak at all.

There was neither pleasure nor profit in sitting down and looking at a person who never opened her lips; and so, after oft-repeated but ineffectual visits of condolence, the sisters finally stopped visiting her cabin.

They saw that she had philosophically taken up the burden of practical life again, in the shape of a family washing, which she carried from the village to her cabin poised on her head; but the old abandon had departed from her gait, and those who chanced to meet her in the road said that her only passing recognition was a groan.

Alone in her isolated cabin, the woman so recently celebrated for her social proclivities ranged her wash-tubs against the wall; alone she soaked, washed, rinsed, starched, and ironed; and when the week's routine of labor was over, alone she sat within her cabin door to rest.

For a long time old Nancy Price or Hester Ann Jennings,—the two superannuated old crones on the plantation,—moved by curiosity and an irresistible impulse to "talk erligion" to so fitting a subject, had continued occasionally to drop in to see the silent woman; but they always came away shaking their heads, and declining to stake their reputations on any formulated prophecy as to just how, when, where, or in what direction Lize Ann would come out of her grief. That she was deliberately poising herself for a spring they felt sure; and yet their only prognostications were always prudently ambiguous.

When, however, the widow had consistently for five long months maintained her position as a broken-hearted recluse not to be approached or consoled, the people began to regard her with a degree of genuine respect; and when one Sunday morning the gathering congregation discovered her sitting in church, a solitary figure in black, on the very last of the Amen pews in the corner, they were moved to sympathy.

She had even avoided a sensational entrance by coming early. Her conduct seemed really genuine; and yet it must be confessed that even in view of the doleful figure she made, there were several women present who were a little less comfortable beside their lovers and husbands after they saw her.

If the wives had but known it, however, they need have had no fear. Jake's deserted wife and child had always weighed painfully upon Lize Ann's consciousness. Even after his death they had come in, diverting and intercepting sympathy that she felt should have been hers. When she married again she would have an unincumbered, free man, all her own.

As she was first at service to-day, she was last to depart; and so pointedly did she wait for the others to go, that not a sister in church had the temerity to approach her with a welcoming hand, or to join her as she walked home. And this was but the beginning. From this time forward the little mourning figure was at every meeting; and when the minister begged such as desired salvation to remain to be prayed for, she knelt and stayed. When, however, the elders or sisters sought her out, and kneeling beside her, questioned her as to the state of her soul, she only groaned and kept silence.

The brethren were really troubled. They had never encountered sorrow or conviction of sin quite so obstinate, so intangible, so speechless, as this. The minister, Brother Langford, had remembered her sorrowing spirit in an impersonal way, and had colored his sermons with tender appeals to such as mourned and were heavy-laden with grief.

But the truth was, the Reverend Mr. Langford, a tall, handsome bachelor of thirty years or thereabouts, was regarded as the best catch in the parish; and had he been half so magnetic in his personality or half so persuasive of speech, all the dusky maids in the country would have been setting their feathered caps for him.

When he conducted the meetings, there were always so many boisterous births into the Kingdom all around him,—when the regenerate called aloud, as they danced, swayed, or swooned, for «Brother Langford,»—that he had not found time to seek out the silent mourners, and so had not yet found himself face to face with the widow. Finally, however, one Sunday night, just as he passed before her, Lize Ann heaved one of her very best moans.

He was on his knees at her side in a moment. Bending his head very low, he asked, in a voice soft and tender, laying his hand the while gently upon her shoulder, «'Ain't you foun' peace yit, Sis' Johnsing?»

She groaned again.

«What is yo' mos' chiefes' sorrer, Sister Johnsing? Is yo' heart mo' grieveder f'om partin' wid yo' dear belovin' pardner, or is yo' soul weighted down wid a sense o' inhuman guilt? Speak out an' tell me, my sister, how yo' trouble seem ter shape itse'f.»

But the widow, though she turned up to him her dry beseeching eyes, only groaned again.

«Can't you speak ter yo' preacher, Sis' Johnsing? He crave in 'is heart ter he'p you.»

Again she looked into his face, and now, with quivering lip, began to speak: «I can't talk heah, Brer Langford; I ain't fittin'; my heart's clean broke. I ain't nothin' but des a miser'ble outcas'. Seem lak even Gord 'isse'f done cas' me orf. I des comes an' goes lak a hongry suck-aig dorg wha' nobody don't claim, a-skulkin' roun' heah in a back seat all by my lone se'f, tryin' ter pick up a little crumb wha' fall f'om de table. But seem lak de feas' is too good fur me. I goes back ter my little dark cabin mo' harder-hearted an' mo' sinfuler 'n I was befo'. Des de ve'y glimsh o' dat empty cabin seem lak hit turn my heart ter stone.»

She dropped her eyes, and as she bent forward, a tear fell upon the young man's hand.

His voice was even tenderer than before when he spoke again. «It is a hard lot, my po' sister, but I am positive sho' dat de sisters an' brers o' de chu'ch would come ter you an' try ter comfort yo' soul ef you would give 'em courage fur ter do so."

"You don't know me, Brer Langford, er you wouldn't name sech a word ter me. I's a *sinner*, an' a sinner what *love sin*. Look lak de wus a sin is, de mo' hit tas'es lak sugar in my mouf. I can't trus' myse'f ter set down an' talk wid dese heah brers an' sisters wha' *I* knows is one half sperityal an' fo' quarters playin' ketcher wid de devil. I can't *trus'* myse'f wid 'em tell Gord set my soul free f'om sin. I'd soon be howlin' happy on de Devil's side des lak I was befo', facin' two-forty on de shell road ter perditiom."

"I see, my po' sister — I see whar yo' trouble lay."

"Yas, an' dat's huccome I tooken *tol'* yer, 'caze I knowed you is got de sperityal eye *to* see it. You knows I's right when I say ter you dat I ain't gwine set down in my cabin an' hol' speech wid *nobody* less'n 'tis a thoo-an'-thoo sperityal pusson, lak a preacher o' de gorspil, tell my soul is safe. An' dey ain't no minister o' de sperit wha' got *time* ter come an' set down an' talk wid a po' ongordly widder pusson lak me. I don't *spect* 'em ter do it. De shepherds can't teck de time to run an' haid orf a ole frazzled-out black sheep lak I is, what 'd be a *dis*grace ter de fol', any way. Dey 'bleege ter spen' dey time a-coaxin' in de purty sleek yo'ng friskin' lambs, an' I don't blame 'em."

"Don't talk dat-a-way, Sis' Johnsing — don't talk dat-a-way. Sence you done specified yo' desire, I'll call an' see you, an' talk an' pray wid you in yo' cabin whensomever you say de word. I knows yo' home is kivered by a cloud o' darkness an' sorrer. When shill I come to you?"

"De mos' lonesomes' time, Brer Langford, an' de time what harden my heart de mos', is in de dark berwilderin' night-times when I fus' goes home. Seem lak ef I c'd des have some reel Gordly man ter come in wid me, an' maybe call out some little passenger o' Scripture to comfort me, tell I c'd des ter say git usen ter de lonesomeness, I c'd maybe feel mo' cancelized ter de Divine will. But, co'se, I don't *expec'* no yo'ng man lak you is ter teck de *trouble* ter turn out'n yo' path fur sech as me."

"I will do it, Sis' Johnsing, an' hit will be a act o' pleasurable Christianity. When de meet'n' is over, ef you will wait, er ef you will walk slow, I will overtaken you on de road quick as I shets up de church-house; an' I pray Gord to give me de seasonable word fur yo' comfort. Amen, an' Gord bless yer!"

Lize Ann had nearly reached her cabin when the reverend brother, stepping forward, gallantly placed his hand beneath her elbow, and aided her to mount the one low step which led to her door.

As they entered the room, he produced and struck a match; while she presented a candle, which he lit and placed upon the table. Neither had yet spoken. If he had his word ready, the season for its utterance seemed not to have arrived.

"'Scuse my manners, Brer Langford," she said finally, "but my heart is so full, seem lak I can't fine speech. Take a rock'n'-cheer an' set down tell I stirs de fire ter meck you welcome in my po' little shanty."

The split pine which she threw upon the coals brought an immediate illumination; and as the young man looked about the apartment he could hardly believe his eyes, so thorough was its transformation since he had seen it on the day of the funeral.

The hearth, newly reddened, fairly glowed with warm color, and the gleaming white-pine floor seemed fresh from the carpenter's plane. Dainty white-muslin curtains hung before the little square windows, and from the shelves a dazzling row of tins reflected the blazing fire a dozen times from their polished surfaces.

The widow leaned forward before him, stirring the fire; and when his eyes fell upon her, his astonishment confirmed his speechlessness. She had removed her black bonnet, and the heavy shawl which had enveloped her figure had fallen behind her into her chair. What he saw was a round, trig, neatly clad, youngish woman, whose face, illumined by the flickering fire, was positively charming in its piquant assertion of grief. Across her shapely bosom lay, neatly folded, a snowy kerchief, less white only than her pearly teeth, as smiling through her sadness, she exclaimed as she turned to her guest:—

"Lor' bless my soul, ef I 'ain't raked out a sweet 'tater out'n dese coals! I 'feared you'll be clair disgusted at sech onmannerly doin's, Brer Langford; but when dey ain't no company heah, I des kivers up my 'taters wid ashes an' piles on de live coals, an' let 'em cook. I don't reck'n you'd even ter say *look* at a roas' 'tater, would you, Brer Langford?"

The person addressed was rubbing his hands together and chuckling. "Ef yer tecks *my* jedgmint, Sis' Johnsing, on de pretater question, roas'in' is de onies way *to* cook 'em."

His hostess had already risen, and before he could remonstrate she had drawn up a little table, lifted the potato from its bed, and laid it on a plate before him.

«Ef yer will set down an' eat a roas' 'tater in my miser'ble little cabin, Brer Langford, I 'clar' fo' gracious hit 'll raise my sperits mightily. Gord knows I wushes I had some'h'n good *to* offer you, a-comin' in out'n de col'; but ef you'll please, sir, have de mannerliness ter hol' de candle, I'll empty my ole cupboard clean inside outen but I'll fin' you *some'h'n* 'nother to spressify yo' welcome.»

Langford rose, and as he held the light to the open safe, his eyes fairly glared. He was hungry, and the snowy shelves were covered with open vessels of tempting food, all more or less broken, but savory as to odor, and most inviting.

«I 'clare, Sis' Johnsing — I 'clare!» were the only words that the man of eloquent speech found to express his appreciation and joy; and his entertainer continued: —

«Dis heah cupboard mecks me 'shame', Brer Langford. Dey ain't a thing fittin' fur sech as you *in* it. Heah's a pan o' col' 'tater pone an' some cabbage an' side meat, an' dis heah's a few ords an' eens o' fried chicken an' a little passel o' spare-ribs, piled in wid co'n-brade scraps. Hit don't look much, but hit's all clean. Heah, you gimme de candle, an' you retch 'em all down, please, sir; an' I ain't shore, but ef I don't disremember, dey's de bes' half a loaf o' reeson-cake 'way back in de fur corner. Dat's hit. Now, dat's some'h'n like. An' now pass down de butter; an' ef yer wants a tumbler o' sweet milk wid yo' 'tater, you'll haf ter hop an' go fetch it. Lis'n ter me, fur Gord sake, talkin' ter Brer Langford same as I'd talk ter a reg'lar plantation nigger!»

Langford hesitated. «Less'n you desires de sweet milk, Sis' Johnsing — »

«I does truly lak a swaller o' sweet milk wid my 'tater, Brer Langford, but seem lak 'fo' I'd git it fur myse'f I'd do widout it. Won't you, please, sir, teck de candle an' fetch it fur me? Go right thoo my room. Hit's in a bottle, a-settin' outside de right-han' winder des as you go in.»

Langford could not help glancing about the widow's chamber as he passed through. If the other room was cozy and clean, this one was charming. The white bed, dazzling in its snowy fluted frills, reminded him of its owner, as she sat in all her starched freshness to-night. The polished pine floor here was nearly covered with neatly fringed patches of carpet, suggestive of housewifely taste as well as luxurious comfort.

He had returned with the bottle, and was seating himself, when the disconsolate widow actually burst into a peal of laughter.

"Lord save my soul!" she exclaimed, "ef he 'ain't gone an' fetched a bottle o' beer! You is a caution, Brer Langford! I wouldn't 'a' had you know I had dat beer in my house fur nothin'. When I was feelin' so po'ly in my fus' grief, seem lak I craved sperityal comfort, an' I went an' bought a whole lot o' lager-beer. I 'lowed maybe I c'd drink my sorrer down, but 'twarn't no use. I c'd drink beer all night, an' hit wouldn't nuver bring nobody to set in dat rockin'-cheer by my side an' teck comfort wid me. Doos you think fur a perfesser ter teck a little beer ur wine when he feels a nachel faintiness is a fatal sin, Brer Langford?"

"Why, no, Sis' Johnsing. Succumstances alter cases, an' hit's de *succumstances* o' *drinkin'* what mecks de *altercations;* an' de way I looks at it, a Christian man is de onies pusson who oughter dare to *trus'* 'isse'f wid de wine cup, 'caze a sinner don' know when ter *stop.*"

"Dat soun' mighty reason'ble, Brer Langford. An' sence you fetched de beer, now you 'bleege ter drink it. But please, sir, go, lak a good man, an' bring my milk, on de tother side in de winder."

The milk was brought, and the Rev. Mr. Langford was soon smacking his lips over the best supper it had been his ministerial good fortune to enjoy for many a day.

As the widow raked a second potato from the fire, she remarked, in a tone of inimitable pathos:—

"Seem lak I can't git usen ter cookin' fur one. I cooks fur two ev'y day; an' somehow I fines a little spec o' comfort in lookin' at de odd po'tion, even ef I has ter eat it myse'f. De secon' 'tater on de hyearth seem lak hit stan's fur company. Seein' as you relishes de beer, Brer Langford, I's proud you made de mistake an' fetched it. Gord knows *some*body better drink it! I got a whole passel o' bottles in my trunk, an' I don't know what ter do wid 'em. A man what wuck an' talk an' preach hard as you does, he *need* a little some'h'n' 'nother ter keep his cour'ge up."

It was an hour past midnight when finally the widow let her guest out the back door; and as she directed him how to reach home by a short cut through her field, she said, while she held his hand in parting:—

«Gord will bless you fur dis night, Brer Langford, fur you is truly sakerficed yo'se'f fur a po' sinner; an' I b'lieve dey's mo' true 'ligion in comfortin' a po' lonely widderless 'oman lak I is, what 'ain't got nobody *to* stan' by 'er, dan in all de sermons a-goin': an' now I gwine turn my face back todes my lonely fireside wid a *better hope* an' a *firmer trus'*, 'caze I knows de love o' Gord done sont you ter me. My po' little brade an' meat warn't highfalutin' nur fine, but you is shared it wid me lak a Christian, an' I gi'n it ter you wid a free heart.»

Langford returned the pressure of her hand, and even shook it heartily during his parting speech:—

«Good-night, my dear sister, an' Gord bless you! I feels mo' courageous an' strenk'n'd myse'f sence I have shared yo' lonely fireside; an' please Gord, I will make it my juty as well *as* my pleasure to he'p you in a similar manner whensomever you desires my presence. I rejoices to see that you is tryin' wid a brave heart to rise f'om yo' sorrer. Keep good cheer, my sister, an' remember dat the Gord o' Aberham an' Isaac an' Jacob—de patriots o' de Lord—is *also* de friend ter de fatherless *an'* widders, an' to them that are desolate an' oppressed.»

With this beautiful admonition, and a last distinct pressure of the hand, the Rev. Mr. Langford disappeared in the darkness, carefully fastening the top button of his coat as he went, as if to cover securely the upper layer of raisin-cake which still lay, for want of lower space, just beneath it within.

He never felt better in his life.

The widow watched his retreating shadow until she dimly saw one dark leg rise over the rail as he scaled the garden fence; then coming in, she hooked the door, and throwing herself on the floor, rolled over and over, laughing until she cried, verily.

«Stan' back, gals, stan' back!» she exclaimed, rising. «Stan' back, I say! A widder done haided yer off wid a cook-pot!» With eyes fairly dancing, she resumed her seat before the fire. She was too much elated for sleep yet. «I 'clare 'fo' gracious, I is a devil!» she chuckled. «Po' Alick—an' po' Steve—an' po' Jake!» she continued, pausing after each name with something that their spiritual presences might have interpreted as a sigh if they were affectionately hovering near her. « But,» she added, her own thoughts supplying the connection, « Brer Langford gwine be de stylishes' one o' de lot.» And then she really sighed. «I mus' go buy some mo' beer. Better git two bottles. He mought ax fur mo', bein' as I got a trunkful.» And here alone in her cabin she roared aloud. «I does wonder huccome I come ter be sech a devil, anyhow? I 'lowed I was safe ter risk de beer. Better git a dozen bottles, I reck'n; give 'im plenty rope, po' boy! Well, Langford honey, good-night fur to-night! But perpare, yo'ng man, perpare!» And chuckling as she went, she passed into her own room and went to bed.

The young minister was as good as his promise, and during the next two months he never failed to stop after every evening meeting to look after the spiritual condition of the « widder Johnsing»; while she, with the consummate skill of a practiced hand, saw to it that without apparent forethought her little cupboard should always supply a material entertainment, full, savory, and varied. If on occasion she lamented a dearth of cold dishes, it was that she might insist on sharing her breakfast with her guest; when producing from her magic safe a ready-dressed spring chicken or squirrel, she would broil it upon the coals in his presence, and the young man would depart thoroughly saturated with the odor of her delightful hospitality.

Langford had heard things about this woman in days gone by, but now he was pleased to realize that they had all been malicious inventions prompted by jealousy. Had he commanded the adjectives, he would have described her as the most generous, hospitable, spontaneous, sympathetic, vivacious, and witty, as well as the most artless, of women. As it was, he thought of her a good deal between visits; and whether the thought moved backward or forward, whether it took shape as a memory or an anticipation, he somehow unconsciously smacked his lips and swallowed. And yet, when one of the elders questioned him as to the spiritual state of the still silent mourner, he knit his brow, and answered with a sigh: —

« It is hard ter say, my brothers — it is hard ter say. De ole lady do nourish an' cherish 'er grief mightily; but yit, ef we hol' off an' don't crowd 'er, I trus' she'll come thoo on de Lord's side yit.»

If there had been the ghost of a twinkle in his interlocutor's eye, it died out, abashed at itself at this pious and carefully framed reply. The widow was indeed fully ten years Langford's senior,—a discrepancy as much exaggerated by outward circumstances as it was minimized in their fireside relations.

So matters drifted on for a month longer. The dozen bottles of beer had been followed by a second, and these again by a half-dozen. This last reduced purchase of course had its meaning. Langford was reaching the end of his tether. At last there were but two bottles left. It was Sunday night again.

The little cupboard had been furnished with unusual elaboration, and the savory odors which emanated from its shelves would have filled the room but for the all-pervading essence of bergamot with which the widow had recklessly deluged her hair. Indeed, her entire toilet betrayed exceptional care to-night.

She had not gone to church, and as it was near the hour for dismissal, she was a trifle nervous; feeling confident that the minister would stop in, ostensibly to inquire the cause of her absence. She had tried this before, and he had not disappointed her.

Finally she detected his familiar announcement, a clearing of his throat, as he approached the door.

« Lif' up de latch an' walk in, Brer Wolf," she laughingly called to him; and as he entered she added, « Look lak you come in answer to my thoughts, Brer Langford.»

« Is dat so, Sis' Johnsing?» he replied, chuckling with delight. « I knowed *some'h'n'* 'nother drawed me clean over f'om de chu'ch in de po'in'-down rain.»

« Is it a-rainin'? I 'clare, I see yer brung yo' umber*el;* but sett'n heah by de fire, I nuver studies 'bout de ele*mints.* I been studyin' 'bout some'h'n' mo'n rain or shine, *I* tell yer.»

« Is yer, Sis' Johnsing? What you been studyin' 'bout?»

« What I been studyin' 'bout? Nemmine what I been studyin' 'bout! I studyin' 'bout *Brer Langford* now. De po' man look so tired an' frazzled out, 'is eyes looks des lak dorg-wood blorsoms. You is des nachelly preached down, Brer Langford, an' you needs a morsel o' some'h'n' 'nother ter stiddy yo' cornstitution.» She rose forthwith, and set about arranging the young man's supper.

« But you 'ain't tol' me yit huccome you 'ain't come ter chu'ch ter-night, Sis' Johnsing?»

« Nemmine 'bout dat now. I ain't studyin' 'bout gwine ter chu'ch now. I des studyin' 'bout how ter induce de size o' yo' eyes down ter dey nachel porportiom. Heah, teck de shovel, an' rake out a han'ful o' coals, please, sir, an' I'll set dis pan o' rolls ter bake. Dat's hit. Now kiver de led good wid live coals an' ashes. Dat's a man! Now time you wrastle wid de j'ints o' dis roas' guinea-hen, an' teck de corkscrew an' perscribe fur dis beer bottle, and go fetch de fresh butter out'n de winder, de rolls 'll be a-singin' ‹Now is de accepted time!›»

It was no wonder the young man thought her charming.

Needless to say, the feast, seasoned by a steady flow of humor, was perfect. But all things earthly have an end; and so, by-and-by, it was all over. A pattering rain without served to enhance the genial in-door charm, but it was time to go.

«Well, Sis' Johnsing, hit's a-gittin' on time fur me ter be a-movin',» said the poor fellow at length — for he hated to leave.

«Yas, I knows it is, Brer Langford,» the hostess answered with a tinge of sadness, «an' dat ain't de wust of it.»

«How does you mean, Sis' Johnsing?»

«'Ain't I tol' yer, Brer Langford, ter-night dat my thoughts was wid you? Don't look at me so quizzical, please, sir, 'caze I got a heavy sorrer in my heart.»

«A sorrer 'bout me, Sis' Johnsing? How so?»

«Brer Langford — I — I been thinkin' 'bout you all day, an'— an'— ter come right down ter de p'int, I — I —» She bit her lip and hesitated. «I 'feerd I done put off what I ought ter said ter you tell look lak hit 'll 'mos' bre'k my heart *to* say it.»

«Speak out, fur Gord sake, Sis' Johnsing, an' ease yo' min'! What is yo' trouble?»

She seemed almost crying. «You — you — you mustn't come heah no mo', Brer Langford.»

«Who — me? Wh-wh-what is I done, Sis' Johnsing?»

«My Gord! how *kin* I say it? You 'ain't done nothin', my dear frien'. You has been Gord's blessin' ter me; but — but — I 'clare 'fo' Gord, how *kin* I say de word? But — don't you see yo'se'f how de succumstances stan'? You is a yo'ng man li'ble to fall in love wid any lakly yo'ng gal any day, an' ter git married — an' of co'se dat's right: but don't you see dat ef a po' lonesome 'oman lak me put *too* much 'pendence orn a yo'ng man lak you is, de time gwine come when he gwine git *tired* a-walkin' all de way f'om chu'ch in de po'in'-down rain des fur charity ter comfort a lonely sinner pusson lak I is; an'— an' settin' heah by myse'f ter-night, I done made up my min' dat I gwine 'scuse you f'om dis task while I *kin* stand it. Of co'se I don't say but hit 'll be hard. You is tooken me by de han' an' he'ped me thoo a dark cloud; but you an' me mus' say far'well ter-night, an' you — you mustn't come back no mo'."

Her face was buried in her hands now, and so she could not see her guest's storm-swept visage as he essayed to answer her.

"You — you — you — you — talkin' 'bout *you* c'n stan' it, Sis' Johnsing, an'— an'— seem lak you 's forgitt'n' all *bout me.*" His voice was trembling. "I — I knows I ain't nothin' but a no-'count yo'ng striplin', so ter speak, an' you is a mannerly lady o' speunce: but hit do seem lak 'fo' you'd send me away, des lak ter say a yaller dorg, you'd — you'd ax me could *I* stan' it; an' — an', tell de trufe, I *can't* stan' it, an' I ain't *gwine* stan' it, 'less'n you dės nachelly, p'int-blank, out an' out, shets de do' in my face."

"Brer Langford — "

"Don't you say Brer Langford ter me no mo', ef you please, ma'am; an'— an' I ain't gwine call you Sis' Johnsing no mo', nuther. You is des, so fur as you consents, hencefo'th an' fo'-ever mo', in season an' out'n season — des my Lize Ann. You knows yo'se'f dat we is come ter be each one-'n'ner's heart's delight." He drew his chair nearer, and leaning forward, seized her hand, as he continued: "Leastwise, dat's de way *my* heart language hitse'f. I done tooken you fur my sweetness 'fo' ter-night, Lize Ann, my honey."

But why follow them any further? Before he left her, the widow had consented, with becoming reluctance, that he should come to her on the following Sunday with the marriage license in his pocket; *on one condition*, and upon this condition she insisted with unyielding pertinacity. It was that Langford should feel entirely free to change his mind, and to love or to marry any other woman within the week ensuing.

Lize Ann arrived late at service on the following Sunday evening. Her name had just been announced as a happy convert who rejoiced in new-found grace; and when she stepped demurely up the aisle, arrayed in a plain white dress, her face beaming with what seemed a spiritual peace, the congregation were deeply touched, and, eager to welcome her into the fold, began to press forward to extend the right hand of fellowship to one who had come in through so much tribulation. It was a happy time all round; and no one was more jubilant than the young pastor, who seemed indeed to rejoice more over this recovered lamb than over the ninety-and-nine within the fold who had not gone astray.

The young girl converts of recent date, never slow to respond to any invitation which led to the chancel, were specially demonstrative in their affectionate welcome; some even going so far as to embrace the new « sister,» while others were moved to shout and sing as they made the tour of the aisles.

When, however, as soon as congratulations were over, it was formally announced that this identical convert, Mrs. Eliza Ann Johnsing, was then and there to be joined in the holy estate of matrimony to the Reverend Julius Cæsar Langford, the shock was so great that these same blessed damosels looked blankly one upon the other in mute dismay for the space of some minutes; and when presently, as a blushing bride, Lize Ann again turned to them for congratulations, it is a shame to have to write it, but they actually did turn their backs and refuse to speak to her.

The emotions of the company were certainly very much mixed; and the two old crones, Nancy Price and Hester Ann Jennings, sitting side by side in a front pew, were seen to nudge each other, as, their old sides shaking with laughter, they exclaimed: —

« What I tol' yer, Sis' Hest' Ann?»

« What I tol' yer, Sis' Nancy?»

« Dat's des what we tol' one-'n'ner Lize Ann gwine do!»

Though no guests were bidden to share it, the wedding supper in the little cabin that night was no mean affair; and when Langford, with a chuckling, half-embarrassed, new-proprietary air, drew the cork from the beer bottle beside his plate, Lize Ann said: —

« Hit do do me good ter see how you relishes dat beer.»

But she did not mention that it was the last bottle, and maybe it was just as well.

WILLIAM STUBBS

(1825–)

BY E. S. NADAL

William Stubbs, Bishop of Oxford, was born at Knaresborough June 21st, 1825, and was educated at the Grammar School, Ripon, and Christ Church, Oxford. He was graduated at Oxford in 1848, taking a first-class in classics and a third-class in mathematics; and was at once elected to a fellowship at Trinity College. In 1848 he was ordained, and later became vicar of a parish in Essex; he was appointed librarian to Archbishop Longley at Lambeth in 1862. He served as a school inspector from 1860 to 1866, when he was appointed Regius Professor of Modern History at Oxford. In 1867 he was elected Fellow of Oriel College, Oxford,—always a great distinction,—and later became an honorary fellow of that college. He received in succession a number of university and ecclesiastical dignities, and in 1884 was appointed Bishop of Chester, from which see he was translated to that of Oxford in 1889.

Bishop Stubbs printed in succession a number of learned editions of various chronicles relating to ecclesiastical and political history, such as 'Registrum Sacrum Anglicum,' 'Memorials of St. Dunstan,' etc. In 1870 he published a work which proved to be the beginning of a very important contribution to English history. This was 'Select Charters and Other Illustrations of English Constitutional History, from the Earliest Period to the Reign of Edward I.' In 1874 appeared the first volume of his great work, 'The Constitutional History of England in its Origin and Development.' The second and third volumes followed in 1875 and 1878 respectively. This book of Dr. Stubbs's is the ablest and most authoritative work upon the subject.

To Dr. Stubbs's view, English constitutional history is not an isolated matter confined to England. To him it is but part of the history of the development of Teutonic institutions throughout Europe. These institutions have spread to countries which are not Teutonic in blood or language. The four German countries are France, Spain, England, and Germany. Of these, France and Spain are German neither in blood nor language. We are given an interesting comparison of the course of German civilization in these four countries.

In France, German civilization resulted in despotism; the reason for which fact is set forth by Dr. Stubbs very clearly. The system which for the last twelve centuries has formed French history was originally an adaptation of German polity to the government of a conquered race. The Franks, a German people, conquered Gaul, already a Romanized country. The form of feudalism they set up there was without any tendencies toward popular freedom. Feudal government in French history, therefore, runs its logical course. The central power, which is the cause of the conquest, grows weaker and weaker, until it is reduced to a shadow, and the parts get stronger. By-and-by the reverse process sets in: with the decay of the feudal system, the central power grows stronger and stronger, until it absorbs unto itself all the power which had once been in the feudatories. An absolute despotism is the result; which ultimately takes the form of an egotistical tyranny, leading in the end to revolution and disaster. Owing to the fact that the Germans conquered Gaul, the German system was imposed on France without the safeguards which it had on its original ground.

Spain is Germanic in the sense that the government is in the hands of Visigoths, who are kindred to the Germans; and that the common law and institutions are Germanic.

In Germany there is no alien race; for Germany is never conquered but by Germans. When one German tribe has conquered another, there is a feudal tenure of land. But where the race remains in its ancient seats, the free German polity continues. The imperial system, however,—what Dr. Stubbs calls the «Mezentian union with Italy,»—has modified German polity in Germany. It is for this reason that the German polity has had a freer development in England than in Germany itself.

Dr. Stubbs emphasizes the essentially German character of the British constitution; showing that the English are people of German descent in blood, character, and language, but more especially in the development of the primitive German civilization. The work, therefore, begins with the description of the Germans in their ancient homes, as given by Cæsar and Tacitus. The characteristics of the aboriginal society are described. In proceeding, the writer follows with great learning the course of constitutional development, from the days of the migration to those of Magna Charta. Volume i. closes with an account of the triumph of the barons over John. The second volume pursues the subject through the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries; the third through the fifteenth century. The third volume is composed of four chapters, each of which is in itself a short history of great value and authority. These chapters are 'Lancaster and York,' 'The King, the Clergy, and the Pope,' 'Parliamentary Antiquities,' and 'Social and Political Influences at the Close of the Middle Ages.'

The first volume concludes with that point in the history of England, when, as regards the rest of the world, it has become a self-reliant and self-sustained nation; and when, internally, it has been prepared for representative institutions. The picture which the author gives incidentally of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries would seem to represent a period of reaction and unmeaning violence. The political bloodshed of the fourteenth century preludes the internecine warfare of the fifteenth century. In the fourteenth century, public and private morality is at a low ebb, and the court is marked by a splendid extravagance and a coarse indulgence. The author does not find anything even in the stories of Chaucer to brighten the wretchedness of the period. If there has been a retrogression in morals, there has been one also in art. In architecture the Perpendicular Style is a decline from the grace and affluent variety of the Decorative. «The change in penmanship is analogous: the writing of the fourteenth century is coarse and blurred compared with the exquisite elegance of the thirteenth, and yet even preferable to the vulgar neatness and deceptive regularity of the fifteenth.» But weak as is the fourteenth century, Dr. Stubbs finds that the fifteenth century is weaker still: «more futile, more bloody, more immoral.» Yet out of it emerges, in spite of all, «the truer and brighter day.» He seems to consider this long period of violence and reaction in a sense the preparation for the constitutional development of the sixteenth century. Upon this point, however, another very able and exact writer, Mr. Gairdner, is at issue with him. Mr. Gairdner considers the events of the fifteenth century as tending not at all in the direction of liberty and constitutional government, but of pure absolutism. To the ordinary reader it will not be quite clear in what way the fifteenth century differs from any other period of reaction, except in degree and duration.

The question will naturally arise, as one reads the pages of Dr. Stubbs (and it is especially pertinent in this work, which is dedicated to literature), whether this very able writer is a literary historian. We are decidedly of the opinion that he is. One characteristic of literature he has to a very high degree,—truthfulness. With him the word or phrase must always be as nearly as possible the precise image of the thought. The expression is never allowed to vary a hair's-breadth to the right or left for the sake of effect. Perhaps he is at times too scrupulous in his preference for a dry or dull phrase which is clearly within the truth, to a brighter one which might go beyond it. One would think that without the sacrifice of truth he might have made the story livelier; for the work is for the most part hard reading. Indeed the style might often be improved in ease and lucidity. But that literary truthfulness of which we have spoken we see everywhere. We see it in the conscientious description of the abstractions among which the reader is required to grope, and to which the greater part of his work is devoted. But there are, here and there, pages in which the writer forsakes the abstract for the concrete, and the dry description of ideas and principles for the delineation of manners and men; and here the literary power is marked. The powerful strokes express the results of a judgment cautious and deliberate in the extreme, and yet firm. The combination of a strong intellect and character with vast knowledge and intense truthfulness produces a deep impression on the mind of the reader. His confidence is won, and he recognizes the influence and guidance of a strong individuality. This again is an indication of the presence of literary power.

In conclusion, it seems to us that the point of view given in this great work is one which it is especially desirable should be impressed upon the people of this country. English history is regarded by Dr. Stubbs not as English only but as German, and as having its forming influences in still more ancient sources and within broader boundaries. If this general view is true of England, it is true also of ourselves; and it is one which we need especially to keep in mind. There is here a disposition to regard ourselves as separate from the rest of the world, and from the world's history. This is one of the temptations of that national pride, which, within its proper limits, is an honorable sentiment. But we are not separate from the rest of the world. As is the case with all countries, the foundations of what we possess we have received from other lands. It is not so important, therefore, that we should ask concerning any national institution or characteristic of our own, whether it is original (for complete originality is no more a possible thing to us than to any other country), as whether it is proper, right, and just.

E. S. Nadal

SOCIAL LIFE IN THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

From the 'Constitutional History of England'

OF THE social life and habits of the citizen and burgher, we have more distinct ideas than of his political action. Social habits no doubt tended to the formation of political habits then as now. Except for the purposes of trade, the townsman seldom went far away from his borough: there he found all his kinsmen, his company, and his customers; his ambition was gratified by election to municipal office; the local courts could settle most of his legal business; in the neighboring villages he could invest the money which he cared to invest in land; once a year, for a few years, he might bear a share in the armed contingent of his town to the shire force or militia; once in his life he might go up, if he lived in a parliamentary borough, to Parliament. There was not much in his life to widen his sympathies: there were no newspapers and few books; there was not enough local distress for charity to find interest in relieving it; there were many local festivities, and time and means for cultivating comfort at home. The burgher had pride in his house, and still more perhaps in his furniture: for although, in the splendid panorama of mediæval architecture, the great houses of the merchants contribute a distinct element of magnificence to the general picture, such houses as Crosby Hall and the Hall of John of Salisbury must always, in the walled towns, have been exceptions to the rule, and far beyond the aspirations of the ordinary tradesman; but the smallest house could be made comfortable and even elegant by the appliances which his trade connection brought within the reach of the master. Hence the riches of the inventories attached to the wills of mediæval townsmen, and many of the most prized relics of mediæval handicraft. Somewhat of the pains for which the private house afforded no scope was spent on the churches and public buildings of the town. The numerous churches of York and Norwich, poorly endowed, but nobly built and furnished, speak very clearly not only of the devotion, but of the artistic culture, of the burghers of those towns. The crafts vied with one another in the elaborate ornamentation of their churches, their chantries, and their halls of meeting; and of the later religious guilds, some seem to have been founded for the express purpose of combining splendid religious services and processions with the work of charity. Such was one of the better results of a confined local sympathy. But the burgher did not, either in life or in death, forget his friends outside the walls. His will generally contained directions for small payments to the country churches where his ancestors lay buried. Strongly as his affections were localized, he was not a mere townsman. Nine-tenths of the cities of mediæval England would now be regarded as mere country towns; and they were country towns even then. They drew in all their new blood from the country; they were the centres for village trade; the neighboring villages were the play-ground and sporting-ground of the townsmen, who had in many cases rights of common pasture, and in some cases rights of hunting, far outside the walls. The great religious guilds just referred to, answered, like race meetings at a later period, the end of bringing even the higher class of the country population into close acquaintance with the townsmen, in ways more likely to be developed into social intercourse than the market or the muster in arms. Before the close of the Middle Ages the rich townsmen had begun to intermarry with the knights and gentry; and many of the noble families of the present day trace the foundation of their fortunes to a lord mayor of London or York, or a mayor of some provincial town. These intermarriages, it is true, became more common after the fall of the elder baronage, and the great expansion of trade under the Tudors; but the fashion was set two centuries earlier. If the adventurous and tragic history of the house of De la Pole shone as a warning light for rash ambition, it stood by no means alone. It is probable that there was no period in English history at which the barrier between the knightly and mercantile class was regarded as insuperable, since the days of Athelstan; when the merchant who had made his three voyages over the sea, and made his fortune, became worthy of thegn-right. Even the higher grades of chivalry were not beyond his reach; for in 1439 we find William Estfield, a mercer of London, made Knight of the Bath. As the merchant found acceptance in the circles of the gentry, civic offices became an object of competition with the knights of the county: their names were enrolled among the religious fraternities of the towns, the trade and craft guilds; and as the value of a seat in Parliament became better appreciated, it was seen that the readiest way to it lay through the office of mayor, recorder, or alderman of some city corporation.

Besides these influences, which without much affecting the local sympathies of the citizen class joined them on to the rank above them, must be considered the fact that two of the most exclusive and "professional" of modern professions were not in the Middle Ages professions at all. Every man was to some extent a soldier, and every man was to some extent a lawyer; for there was no distinctly military profession, and of lawyers only a very small and somewhat dignified number. Thus although the burgher might be a mere mercer, or a mere saddler, and have very indistinct notions of commerce beyond his own warehouse or workshop, he was trained in warlike exercises; and he could keep his own accounts, draw up his own briefs, and make his own will, with the aid of a scrivener or a chaplain who could supply an outline of form, with but little fear of transgressing the rules of the court of law or of probate. In this point he was like the baron,— liable to be called at very short notice to very different sorts of work. Finally, the townsman whose borough was not represented in Parliament, or did not enjoy such municipal organization as placed the whole administration in the hands of the inhabitants, was a fully qualified member of the county court of his shire, and shared, there and in the corresponding institutions, everything that gave a political coloring to the life of the country gentleman or the yeoman.

Many of the points here enumerated belong, it may be said, to the rich merchant or great burgher, rather than to the ordinary tradesman and craftsman. This is true; but it must be remembered always that there was no such gulf between the rich merchant and the ordinary craftsman in the town as existed between the country knight and the yeoman, or between the yeoman and the laborer. In the city it was merely the distinction of wealth; and the poorest apprentice might look forward to becoming a master of his craft, a member of the livery of his company, to a place in the council, an aldermanship, a mayoralty, the right of becoming an esquire for his life and leaving an honorable coat-of-arms for his children. The yeoman had no such straight road before him: he might improve his chances as they came; might lay field to field, might send his sons to war or to the universities: but for him also the shortest way to make one of them a gentleman was to send him to trade; and there even the villein might find liberty, and a new life that was not hopeless. But the yeoman, with fewer chances, had as a rule less ambition; possibly also more of that loyal feeling towards his nearest superior, which formed so marked a feature of mediæval country life. The townsman knew no superior to whose place he might not aspire: the yeoman was attached by ties of hereditary attachment to a great neighbor, whose superiority never occurred to him as a thing to be coveted or grudged. The factions of the town were class factions, and political or dynastic factions: the factions of the country were the factions of the lords and gentry. Once perhaps in a century there was a rising in the country: in every great town there was, every few years, something of a struggle, something of a crisis,—if not between capital and labor in the modern sense, at least between trade and craft, or craft and craft, or magistracy and commons, between excess of control and excess of license.

In town and country alike there existed another class of men, who, although possessing most of the other benefits of freedom, lay altogether outside political life. In the towns there were the artificers, and in the country the laborers, who lived from hand to mouth, and were to all intents and purposes "the poor who never cease out of the land." There were the craftsmen who could or would never aspire to become masters, or to take up their freedom as citizens; and the cottagers who had no chance of acquiring a rood of ground to till and leave to their children: two classes alike keenly sensitive to all changes in the seasons and in the prices of the necessaries of life; very indifferently clad and housed; in good times well fed, but in bad times not fed at all. In some respects these classes differed from that which in the present day furnishes the bulk of the mass of pauperism. The evils which are commonly, however erroneously it may be, regarded as resulting from redundant population, had not in the Middle Ages the shape which they have taken in modern times. Except in the walled towns, and then only in exceptional times, there could have been no necessary overcrowding of houses. The very roughness and uncleanliness of the country laborer's life was to some extent a safeguard: if he lived, as foreigners reported, like a hog, he did not fare or lodge worse than the beasts that he tended. In the towns, the restraints on building, which were absolutely necessary to keep the limited area of the streets open for traffic, prevented any great variation in the number of inhabited houses: for although in some great towns, like Oxford, there were considerable vacant spaces which were apt to become a sort of gipsy camping-ground for the waifs and strays of a mixed population, most of them were closely packed; the rich men would not dispense with their courts and gardens, and the very poor had to lodge outside the walls. In the country townships, again, there was no such liberty as has in more modern times been somewhat imprudently used, of building or not building cottage dwellings without due consideration of place or proportion to the demand for useful labor. Every manor had its constitution, and its recognized classes and number of holdings on the demesne and the freehold, the village and the waste; the common arable and the common pasture were a village property that warned off all interlopers and all superfluous competition. So strict were the barriers, that it seems impossible to suppose that any great increase of population ever presented itself as a fact to the mediæval economist; or if he thought of it at all, he must have regarded the recurrence of wars and pestilences as a providential arrangement for the readjustment of the conditions of his problem. As a fact, whatever the cause may have been, the population of England during the Middle Ages did not vary in anything like the proportion in which it has increased since the beginning of the last century; and there is no reason to think that any vast difference existed between the supply and demand of homes for the poor. Still there were many poor; if only the old, the diseased, the widows, and the orphans are to be counted in the number. There were too in England, as everywhere else, besides the absolutely helpless, whole classes of laborers and artisans whose earnings never furnished more than the mere requisites of life; and besides these, idle and worthless beggars, who preferred the freedom of vagrancy to the restrictions of ill-remunerated labor. All these classes were to be found in town and country alike.

TRANSITION FROM THE AGE OF CHIVALRY

From the ‹Constitutional History of England›

And here our survey, too general and too discursive perhaps to have been wisely attempted, must draw to its close. The historian turns his back on the Middle Ages with a brighter hope for the future, but not without regrets for what he is leaving. He recognizes the law of the progress of this world; in which the evil and debased elements are so closely intermingled with the noble and the beautiful, that in the assured march of good, much that is noble and beautiful must needs share the fate of the evil and debased. If it were not for the conviction that however prolific and progressive the evil may have been, the power of good is more progressive and more prolific, the chronicler of a system that seems to be vanishing might lay down his pen with a heavy heart. The most enthusiastic admirer of mediæval life must grant that all that was good and great in it was languishing even to death; and the firmest believer in progress must admit that as yet there were few signs of returning health. The sun of the Plantagenets went down in clouds and thick darkness; the coming of the Tudors gave as yet no promise of light: it was "as the morning spread upon the mountains,"—darkest before the dawn.

The natural inquiry, how the fifteenth century affected the development of national character, deserves an attempt at an answer; but it can be little more than an attempt, for very little light is thrown upon it by the life and genius of great men. With the exception of Henry V., English history can show throughout the age no man who even aspires to greatness; and the greatness of Henry V. is not of a sort that is peculiar to the age or distinctive of a stage of national life. His personal idiosyncrasy was that of a hero in no heroic age. Of the best of the minor workers, none rises beyond mediocrity of character or achievement. Bedford was a wise and noble statesman, but his whole career was a hopeless failure. Gloucester's character had no element of greatness at all. Beaufort, by his long life, high rank, wealth, experience, and ability, held a position almost unrivaled in Europe, but he was neither successful nor disinterested: fair and honest and enlightened as his policy may have been, neither at the time nor ever since has the world looked upon him as a benefactor; he appears in history as a lesser Wolsey,—a hard sentence perhaps, but one which is justified by the general condition of the world in which the two cardinals had to play their part; Beaufort was the great minister of an expiring system, Wolsey of an age of great transitions. Among the other clerical administrators of the age, Kemp and Waynflete were faithful, honest, enlightened, but quite unequal to the difficulties of their position; and besides them there are absolutely none that come within even the second class of greatness as useful men. It is the same with the barons: such greatness as there is amongst them — and the greatness of Warwick is the climax and type of it — is more conspicuous in evil than in good. In the classes beneath the baronage, as we have them portrayed in the Paston Letters, we see more of violence, chicanery, and greed, than of anything else. Faithful attachment to the faction which from hereditary or personal liking they have determined to maintain, is the one redeeming feature; and it is one which by itself may produce as much evil as good,— that nation is in an evil plight in which the sole redeeming quality is one that owes its existence to a deadly disease. All else is languishing: literature has reached the lowest depths of dullness; religion, so far as its chief results are traceable, has sunk, on the one hand into a dogma fenced about with walls which its defenders cannot pass either inward or outward, on the other hand into a mere war-cry of the cause of destruction. Between the two lies a narrow borderland of pious and cultivated mysticism, far too fastidious to do much for the world around. Yet here as everywhere else, the dawn is approaching. Here as everywhere else, the evil is destroying itself; and the remaining good, lying deep down and having yet to wait long before it reaches the surface, is already striving toward the sunlight that is to come. The good is to come out of the evil: the evil is to compel its own remedy; the good does not spring from it, but is drawn up through it. In the history of nations, as of men, every good and perfect gift is from above: the new life strikes down in the old root; there is no generation from corruption.

So we turn our back on the age of chivalry, of ideal heroism, of picturesque castles and glorious churches and pageants, camps and tournaments, lovely charity and gallant self-sacrifice; with their dark shadows of dynastic faction, bloody conquest, grievous misgovernance, local tyrannies, plagues and famines unhelped and unaverted, hollowness of pomp, disease and dissolution. The charm which the relics of mediæval art have woven around the later Middle Ages must be resolutely, ruthlessly broken. The attenuated life of the later Middle Ages is in thorough discrepancy with the grand conceptions of the earlier times. The thread of national life is not to be broken; but the earlier strands are to be sought out and bound together, and strengthened with threefold union for the new work. But it will be a work of time: the forces newly liberated by the shock of the Reformation will not at once cast off the foulness of the strata through which they have passed before they reached the higher air; much will be destroyed that might well have been conserved, and some new growths will be encouraged that ought to have been checked. In the new world, as in the old, the tares are mingled with the wheat. In the destruction and in the growth alike, will be seen the great features of difference between the old and the new.

The printing-press is an apt emblem or embodiment of the change. Hitherto men have spent their labor on a few books, written by the few for the few, with elaborately chosen material, in consummately beautiful penmanship, painted and emblazoned as if each one were a distinct labor of love, each manuscript unique, precious,—the result of most careful individual training, and destined for the complete enjoyment of a reader educated up to the point at which he can appreciate its beauty. Henceforth books are to be common things. For a time the sanctity of the older forms will hang about the printing-press; the magnificent volumes of Fust and Colard Mansion will still recall the beauty of the manuscript, and art will lavish its treasures on the embellishment of the libraries of the great. Before long, printing will be cheap, and the unique or special beauty of the early presses will have departed; but light will have come into every house, and that which was the luxury of the few will have become the indispensable requisite of every family.

With the multiplication of books comes the rapid extension and awakening of mental activity. As it is with the form, so with the matter. The men of the decadence, not less than the men of the renaissance, were giants of learning; they read and assimilated the contents of every known book; down to the very close of the era, the able theologian would press into the service of his commentary or his summa every preceding commentary or summa, with gigantic labor, and with an acuteness which, notwithstanding that it was ill-trained and misdirected, is in the eyes of the desultory reader of modern times little less than miraculous: the books were rare, but the accomplished scholar had worked through them all. Outside his little world all was comparatively dark. Here too the change was coming. Scholarship was to take a new form: intensity of critical power, devoted to that which was worth criticizing, was to be substituted as the characteristic of a learned man for the indiscriminating voracity of the earlier learning. The multiplication of books would make such scholarship as that of Vincent of Beauvais, or Thomas Aquinas, or Gerson, or Torquemada, an impossibility. Still there would be giants like Scaliger and Casaubon,—men who culled the fair flower of all learning; critical as the new scholars, comprehensive as the old; reserved for the patronage of sovereigns and nations, and perishing when they were neglected, like the beautiful books of the early printers. But they are a minor feature in the new picture. The real change is that by which every man comes to be a reader and a thinker; the Bible comes to every family, and each man is priest in his own household. The light is not so brilliant, but it is everywhere; and it shines more and more unto the perfect day. It is a false sentiment that leads men in their admiration of the unquestionable glory of the old culture, to undervalue the abundant wealth and growing glory of the new.

The parallel holds good in other matters besides books. He is a rash man who would, with one word of apology, compare the noble architecture of the Middle Ages with the mean and commonplace type of building into which, by a steady decline, our churches, palaces, and streets had sunk at the beginning of the present century. Here too the splendor of the few has been exchanged for the comfort of the many; and although perhaps in no description of culture has the break between the old and the new been more conspicuous than in this, it may be said that the many are now far more capable of appreciating the beauty which they will try to rival, than ever the few were to comprehend the value of that which they were losing. But it is needless to multiply illustrations of a truth which is exemplified by every new invention: the steam plow and the sewing-machine are less picturesque, and call for a less educated eye than that of the plowman and the seamstress: but they produce more work with less waste of energy; they give more leisure and greater comfort; they call out, in the production and improvement of their mechanism, a higher and more widely spread culture. And all these things are growing instead of decaying.

To conclude with a few of the commonplaces which must be familiar to all who have approached the study of history with a real desire to understand it, but which are apt to strike the writer more forcibly at the end than the beginning of his work. However much we may be inclined to set aside the utilitarian plan of studying our subject, it cannot be denied that we must read the origin and development of our Constitutional History chiefly with the hope of educating ourselves into the true reading of its later fortunes, and so train ourselves for a judicial examination of its evidences,—a fair and equitable estimate of the rights and wrongs of policy, dynasty, and party. Whether we intend to take the position of a judge or the position of an advocate, it is most necessary that both the critical insight should be cultivated, and the true circumstances of the questions that arise at later stages should be adequately explored. The man who would rightly learn the lesson that the seventeenth century has to teach, must not only know what Charles thought of Cromwell and what Cromwell thought of Charles, but must try to understand the real questions at issue, not by reference to an ideal standard only, but by tracing the historical growth of the circumstances in which those questions arose; he must try to look at them as it might be supposed that the great actors would have looked at them if Cromwell had succeeded to the burden which Charles inherited, or if Charles had taken up the part of the hero of reform. In such an attitude it is quite unnecessary to exclude party feeling or personal sympathy. Whichever way the sentiment may incline, the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, is what history would extract from her witnesses; the truth which leaves no pitfalls for unwary advocates, and which is in the end the fairest measure of equity to all. In the reading of that history we have to deal with high-minded men, with zealous enthusiastic parties, of whom it cannot be fairly said that one was less sincere in his belief in his own cause than was the other. They called each other hypocrites and deceivers, for each held his own views so strongly that he could not conceive of the other as sincere; but to us they are both of them true and sincere, whichever way our sympathies or our sentiments incline. We bring to the reading of their acts a judgment which has been trained through the Reformation history to see rights and wrongs on both sides; sometimes see the balance of wrong on that side which we believe, which we know, to be the right. We come to the Reformation history from the reading of the gloomy period to which the present volume has been devoted; a worn-out helpless age, that calls for pity without sympathy, and yet balances weariness with something like regrets. Modern thought is a little prone to eclecticism in history: it can sympathize with Puritanism as an effort after freedom, and put out of sight the fact that

Puritanism was itself a grinding social tyranny, that wrought out its ends by unscrupulous detraction, and by the profane handling of things which should have been sacred even to the fanatic, if he really believed in the cause for which he raged. There is little real sympathy with the great object, the peculiar creed that was oppressed: as a struggle for liberty, the Quarrel of Puritanism takes its stand beside the Quarrel on the Investitures. Yet like every other struggle for liberty, it ended in being a struggle for supremacy. On the other hand, the system of Laud and of Charles seems to many minds to contain so much that is good and sacred, that the means by which it was maintained fall into the background. We would not judge between the two theories which have been nursed by the prejudices of ten generations. To one side liberty, to the other law, will continue to outweigh all other considerations of disputed and detailed right or wrong: it is enough for each to look at them as the actors themselves looked at them, or as men look at party questions of their own day, when much of private conviction and personal feeling must be sacrificed to save those broader principles for which only great parties can be made to strive.

The historian looks with actual pain upon many of these things. Especially in quarrels where religion is concerned, the hollowness of the pretension to political honesty becomes a stumbling-block in the way of fair judgment. We know that no other causes have ever created so great and bitter struggles; have brought into the field, whether of war or controversy, greater and more united armies. Yet no truth is more certain than this, that the real motives of religious action do not work on men in masses; and that the enthusiasm which creates Crusaders, Inquisitors, Hussites, Puritans, is not the result of conviction, but of passion provoked by oppression or resistance, maintained by self-will, or stimulated by the mere desire of victory. And this is a lesson for all time; and for practical life as well as historical judgment. And on the other hand, it is impossible to regard this as an adequate solution of the problem: there must be something, even if it be not religion or liberty, for which men will make so great sacrifices.

The best aspect of an age of controversy must be sought in the lives of the best men; whose honesty carries conviction to the understanding, whilst their zeal kindles the zeal, of the many. A study of the lives of such men will lead to the conclusion, that in spite of internecine hostility in act, the real and true leaders had far more in common than they knew of: they struggled, in the dark or in the twilight, against the evil which was there, and which they hated with equal sincerity; they fought for the good which was there, and which really was strengthened by the issue of the strife. Their blows fell at random: men perished in arms against one another whose hearts were set on the same end and aim; and that good end and aim which neither of them had seen clearly was the inheritance they left to their children, made possible and realized not so much by the victory of one as by the truth and self-sacrifice of both.

At the close of so long a book, the author may be suffered to moralize. His end will have been gained if he has succeeded in helping to train the judgment of his readers to discern the balance of truth and reality; and whether they go on to further reading with the aspirations of the advocate or the calmness of the critic, to rest content with nothing less than the attainable maximum of truth, to base their arguments on nothing less sacred than that highest justice which is found in the deepest sympathy with erring and straying men.

SIR JOHN SUCKLING

(1608–1642)

Sir John Suckling is an interesting product of an interesting age. His portrait by Vandyke — that of a fair-haired gallant, his long curls hanging over his shoulders, his eyes a steely blue, firm red lips, and a stalwart yet graceful figure arrayed in the richest silks and velvets — tells much of his story. But there are other characteristics less easily discovered. With the nonchalant manner, half bravado, half indifference, of the cavalier, he took good care of himself on at least two occasions when the spirit of the age and his training would have led him to display less caution. The King himself (Charles I.) did not excel him in the gorgeousness of his entertainments, nor was there so prodigal a gamester in the kingdom; yet he was capable of giving the soundest and the most virtuous advice, and of expressing the most edifying and Christian sentiments. Had his brother-in-law Sir George Southcott but lived to read Sir John's remarkable epistle on Southcott's death by his own hand, he would have refrained from such a proceeding for very shame of becoming an object of ridicule. Yet when Suckling, an exile and in distress, came to a dangerous pass in his fortunes, he committed suicide, regardless of his own satire. His splendid, erratic, melancholy career left no trace either of sadness or sentiment in his poems. There is nothing of the troubadour, nothing of the minor strain of melancholy cheerfulness which touches the heart in Lovelace's gay lyrics. The poem beginning

Sir John Suckling

«Why so pale and wan, fond lover?
Prythee why so pale?»

is completely Suckling, and shows that his wreaths were not twined from the cypress-tree. Debt and love were both troublesome, with perhaps a slight difference in favor of debt. He never, according to the scanty facts known of his life, had a serious love affair, and certainly he sported with the *grande passion*. Yet he treated it with a curious, contradictory respect. He required of his imaginary «soul's mistress» neither beauty, nor wit, nor charm,—making all these qualities subjective, and bidding her teach him only to be true, that love might last forever. In an age of license he degraded literature with no coarse or impure line; and now and then he who had written with such pious zeal the paper ‹Religious Thoughts on the State of the Nation,› composed a poem which chills the blood, though he who gave it birth has slept for more than two centuries among those «who in fine garments and chests of cedar are laid up for immortality.»

Suckling, whose «pretty touch savors more of the grape than the lamp,» little as he heeded it often saw the death's-head at the feast. He saw it in the lovely lines ‹Farewell to Love,› after taking leave of the «dear nothings» with which he had floated in the shadowed landscape of life. The poem ‹Against Absence›—chiefly acute raillery, though there is a Comus-like touch in its simple force—cannot be read without producing a feeling of solitude. And in the rich, luxuriant ‹Dream,› cold fingers seem to press the brow.

Suckling's poems, all collected, are comprised in one thin volume. He set out to be a dramatist, fancying that what genius for letters he possessed was dramatic; and although he had written a satire entitled ‹The Session of the Poets,›—which Byron imitated in ‹English Bards and Scotch Reviewers,› and which in its day had as great a vogue,—and two prose essays, the ‹Thoughts on Religion› and ‹A Tract on Socinianism,› he made his first serious dramatic attempt in 1638, when he published ‹Aglaura,›—a play studded with beautiful passages but without reality or development. The poets who had themselves been ridiculed all laughed at it, and called it «a rivulet of text and a meadow of margin.» Its interest to us is in its having been the first play acted with regular scenery, which had hitherto been used only in the masques. His next play, ‹Brennoralt› (1639), has finer qualities, but might have been written by any of the «mob of gentlemen» whom Pope described as writing as well as they did anything else. Steele greatly admired a description of the loves of the hero and heroine, Brennoralt and Franclia; comparing it to a passage in ‹Paradise Lost.› ‹The Goblins,› modeled after ‹Macbeth,› need not detain us but that it contains the oft-quoted line, original with Sir John, «The Prince of Darkness is a gentleman» (Act iii., Scene 2).

As a lyric poet alone then, Suckling will be remembered; and probably as the author of the single lyric, ‹Ballad on a Wedding,› composed on the marriage of Roger Boyle (first Earl of Orrery) with Lady Mary Howard. The nimble grace, the happy turn, the elegance and sparkle of fancy in this poem, the light and delicate touch, and the ingenious conception, have placed it among the masterpieces of

English lyrics. He has written other poems that will not be readily forgotten, though they may not secure immortality:—

«I prythee send me back my heart,»

with recurring lines like a fugue—

«No, no, fair Mistress, it must be;»

the stanzas headed ‹The Invocation,› with their difficult construction and recurring rhymes; the love song with its reverent gallantry,—

«I touch her as my beads, with devout care,
And go in to my courtship as my prayer;»

and the ideally lovely poem beginning «If you refuse me once,» and, after the first three stanzas that breathe the very soul of manliness, the beautiful and passionate outburst «Would that I were all soul,» and the «Why so pale and wan, fond lover?» already referred to.

Hallam, chary of praise, says, «Suckling is acknowledged to have left behind him all former writers of song, in gayety and ease. It is not equally clear that he has ever been surpassed.»

Few facts are known of his brief, brilliant career. His father, John Suckling, was a knight and a Secretary of State; the son was born at Winton in Middlesex, and baptized February 10th, 1608–9. He was early attached to the court, and, says Sir William Davenant, «for his accomplishments and ready sparkling witt was the bull that was most bayted; his repartee being most sparkling when set on and provoked.» He went abroad, and served under Gustavus Adolphus. To aid Charles on his Scottish campaign, he raised a troop of horse; but though they cost him twelve thousand pounds, and were clad in white and red, when they came in sight of the army at Dunse they fled without the loss of a feather. Hence the lampoon Percy preserves:—

«Sir John got him an ambling nag
To Scotland for to ride-a!»

He gave good advice to both King and Queen in their subsequent troubles; but at the fall of Strafford, fled to France, where his faint heart and gay philosophy failed him. He died in Paris in 1642. His memoir and poems were published by his relative, Rev. Alfred Suckling (London, 1832).

SONG

Why so pale and wan, fond lover?
  Prithee, why so pale?
Will, when looking well can't move her,
  Looking ill prevail?
  Prithee, why so pale?

Why so dull and mute, young sinner?
  Prithee, why so mute?
Will, when speaking well can't win her,
  Saying nothing do't?
  Prithee, why so mute?

Quit, quit, for shame! this will not move:
  This cannot take her.
If of herself she will not love,
  Nothing can make her:
  The Devil take her!

A BRIDE

From the ‹Ballad Upon a Wedding›

The maid — and thereby hangs a tale,
For such a maid no Whitsun-ale
  Could ever yet produce;
No grape that's kindly ripe, could be
So round, so plump, so soft as she,
  Nor half so full of juice.

Her finger was so small, the ring
Would not stay on which they did bring,—
  It was too wide a peck;
And to say truth (for out it must),
It looked like the great collar (just)
  About our young colt's neck.

Her feet beneath her petticoat,
Like little mice stole in and out,
  As if they feared the light:
But oh, she dances such a way!
No sun upon an Easter-day
  Is half so fine a sight.

Her cheeks so rare a white was on,
No daisy makes comparison;
Who sees them is undone:
For streaks of red were mingled there,
Such as are on a Catherine pear,
The side that's next the sun.

Her lips were red, and one was thin,
Compared to that was next her chin,
Some bee had stung it newly;
But Dick, her eyes so guard her face,
I durst no more upon them gaze
Than on the sun in July.

Her mouth so small, when she does speak,
Thou'dst swear her teeth her words did break,
That they might passage get;
But she so handled still the matter,
They came as good as ours, or better,
And are not spent a whit.

THE HONEST LOVER

Honest lover whosoever,
If in all thy love there ever
Was one wavering thought, if thy flame
Were not still even, still the same,—
Know this:
Thou lov'st amiss,
And, to love true,
Thou must begin again, and love anew.

If, when she appears i' th' room,
Thou dost not quake, and art struck dumb,
And in striving this to cover,
Dost not speak thy words twice over,—
Know this:
Thou lov'st amiss,
And, to love true,
Thou must begin again, and love anew.

If fondly thou dost not mistake,
And all defects for graces take,
Persuad'st thyself that jests are broken
When she hath little or nothing spoken,—

Know this:
Thou lov'st amiss,
And, to love true,
Thou must begin again, and love anew.

If when thou appear'st to be within,
Thou lett'st not men ask and ask again;
And when thou answer'st, if it be
To what was asked thee properly,—
Know this:
Thou lov'st amiss,
And, to love true,
Thou must begin again, and love anew.

If when thy stomach calls to eat,
Thou cutt'st not fingers 'stead of meat,
And, with much gazing on her face
Dost not rise hungry from the place,—
Know this:
Thou lov'st amiss,
And, to love true,
Thou must begin again, and love anew.

If by this thou dost discover
That thou art no perfect lover,
And, desiring to love true,
Thou dost begin to love anew,—
Know this:
Thou lov'st amiss,
And, to love true,
Thou must begin again, and love anew.

THE CONSTANT LOVER

Out upon it! I have loved
Three whole days together;
And am like to love three more,
If it prove fair weather.

Time shall moult away his wings,
Ere he shall discover
In the whole wide world again
Such a constant lover.

But the spite on't is, no praise
Is due at all to me:
Love with me had made no stays,
Had it any been but she.

Had it any been but she,
And that very face,
There had been at least ere this
A dozen dozen in her place.

VERSES

I am confirmed a woman can
Love this, or that, or any man:
This day she's melting hot,
To-morrow swears she knows you not;
If she but a new object find,
Then straight she's of another mind.
Then hang me, ladies, at your door,
If e'er I doat upon you more.

Yet still I love the fairsome — why?
For nothing but to please my eye:
And so the fat and soft-skinned dame
I'll flatter to appease my flame;
For she that's musical I'll long,
When I am sad, to sing a song.
Then hang me, ladies, at your door,
If e'er I doat upon you more.

I'll give my fancy leave to range
Through everywhere to find out change;
The black, the brown, the fair shall be
But objects of variety;
I'll court you all to serve my turn,
But with such flames as shall not burn.
Then hang me, ladies, at your door,
If e'er I doat upon you more.

THE METAMORPHOSIS

The little boy, to show his might and power,
Turned Io to a cow, Narcissus to a flower;
Transformed Apollo to a homely swain,
And Jove himself into a golden rain.
These shapes were tolerable, but by the mass
He's metamorphosed me into an ass.

SONG

I prithee send me back my heart,
Since I cannot have thine;
For if from thine thou wilt not part,
Why then shouldst thou have mine?

Yet now I think on't, let it lie:
To find it were in vain,
For thou'st a thief in either eye
Would steal it back again.

Why should two hearts in one breast lie,
And yet not lodge together?
O love, where is thy sympathy,
If thus our breasts thou sever?

But love is such a mystery,
I cannot find it out;
For when I think I'm best resolved
I then am most in doubt.

Then farewell care, and farewell woe,
I will no longer pine;
For I'll believe I have her heart,
As much as she hath mine.

HERMANN SUDERMANN

(1857–)

From every new literary mode, however madcap and ephemeral, something of value may be won. In the back-and-forward swing between the fancies of an overheated idealism and the facts of a frigid realism, the pendulum returns to its vertical with something brought from each of the extremes. From the crass realism into which, for a time, the once so fantastic literature of Germany threatened to petrify, emerges Hermann Sudermann, equipped with all the trenchant power of the realistic workman, but bringing to his work the sympathetic insight of the idealist. He deals with social problems, with the struggles of impulsive human nature at war with social conditions; but he does not repel by sordid details, nor delight in depicting mere wretchedness and woe. His characters are swayed by the passions, sorrows, and mental twists, of which all of us in our own experience have had glimpses at least that render them intelligible. His unswerving belief in the uplifting forces of man's nature gives to his gloomiest conceptions a saving buoyancy; he finds a way to reconcilement with life, even though the way lie through death. Wide gray plains and moorlands, like those of East Prussia where the poet was born, stretch far away; but behind waving reed and withering sedge is the white sky-line of the dawn. Sudermann cannot be classed with any school or cult. In him the swaying pendulum of fads and fashions has come to rest. He is the sane artist; painting the world as he sees it, and seeing it with the intuitions of a poet.

Hermann Sudermann

Sudermann has, within a decade, taken his place among the foremost German novelists and dramatists that mark the end of the nineteenth century. He is now one of the chief literary figures in the eye of modern Europe. He was born at Matzicken, in the great Baltic plain near the boundaries of Russia, on September 30th, 1857; and the wide outreach of this level country is the scene upon which most of his tales and novels run their course. His parents were poor; and it was a matter of pecuniary necessity when, at the age of fourteen, he was apprenticed to a chemist. Subsequently, however, he was enabled to study at Tilsit, Königsberg, and Berlin, and became tutor in the household of the genial story-teller Hans Hopfen. In 1881, after devoting the leisure hours of six years to history, philology, and modern languages, he turned to journalism, and assumed the editorial management of a political weekly in Berlin. In 1885 a collection of his stories from the newspapers was published under the title of ‘Im Zwielicht’ (In the Twilight). Though not without a melancholy touch, they possess the wit and sprightliness of French stories; but they struck a more serious note, which gave promise of greater work to follow. In 1886, with the publication of ‘Frau Sorge’ (Dame Care), Sudermann stepped at once into the front rank of German novelists. Three years later, again at a single bound, he took the first place among the dramatists with his admirably constructed play of ‘Ehre’ (Honor). It began its triumphant career on the Berlin stage in November 1889, and rapidly conquered the theatres of all Germany. Meanwhile in 1887, three volumes of his tales had appeared, under the general title of ‘Geschwister’ (Brothers and Sisters); and two years afterward came ‘Der Katzensteg’ (The Cat Bridge), which some critics have not hesitated to pronounce the most powerful novel of contemporary German literature. In 1890 a new drama, ‘Sodoms Ende’ (Destruction of Sodom), displayed the author's increasing command of stage technique, which in ‘Heimath’ (Home) becomes complete mastery. The more recent ‘Schmetterlingsschlacht’ (Battle of the Butterflies) is less satisfactory. In 1892 appeared the story of ‘Iolanthe's Hochzeit’ (Iolanthe's Wedding), full of delightful humor and merry-making, and without a shade of melancholy. In the following year ‘Es War’ (It Was) made a genuine sensation, running through fifteen editions in twelve months. Sudermann's fame seems now secure, whatever the future may hold.

The tendency of German novelists to subordinate narrative and dramatic development to sentiment and psychological comment, has rendered the average German novel dull and distasteful to foreign readers. Sudermann appeals to a cosmopolitan taste: in him is no trace either of sentimentality or moral reflection. He is strong, brilliant, concise, effective; the impression he makes is indelible; the mood into which he throws the reader, though sombre, is sympathetic; and if melancholy, never morbid. Of the longer novels, ‘Dame Care’ best exhibits the perfection of his workmanship. It is the story of a lad whose life is a constant struggle with adversity; upon him devolve all the cares of a large family, until he has become so completely enslaved by the Lady of Sorrows that he never even thinks of making a claim for personal happiness. To save his aged father from committing a crime, he sets fire to his own property, and is sentenced as an incendiary. Over all his weary life hovers the love that Elsbeth bears him, but he never permits himself to love her; through her he is finally set free from the thraldom of Dame Care. The tale is infinitely sad; but told with tenderness and a sympathetic fidelity to nature. That out of his troubles Paul is led by a woman's hand into ultimate peace and serenity, shows that here is a realist who does not mix his colors with misery only. In the saving power of woman, Sudermann has firm faith. In ‹Der Wunsch› the heroine and her conscience are the protagonists: it is a psychological study. Olga falls in love with her sister's husband; and while she is nursing her sister through a severe illness, the thought comes unbidden: «If only she were to die!» She does die, and the widower offers himself to Olga; but she, conscience-stricken lest it was her wish that killed her sister, and almost convinced of her guilt, wins back her moral tranquillity by committing suicide. In ‹Der Katzensteg,› it is again the heroine who is the centre of interest. Regine exhibits the character-building of a girl, who, with the barbarous elements of her untamed nature, combines a primitive nobility of soul rising even to the sublime heights of complete self-renunciation. ‹Es War,› the most successful of Sudermann's novels, draws the picture of an innocent young girl, Hertha, in love with a man much older than herself; he in turn is in love with a married woman. This to Hertha's unworldliness seems, in spite of her suspicions, impossible; and conviction dawns upon her slowly. The study is perfectly natural: the author has not shrunk from great frankness of speech; but with it all he proclaims his faith in the essential goodness of the human heart.

As a dramatist, Sudermann has won international fame. ‹Ehre› roused the German public from its apathy, and the new genius was all-hailed as the re-creator of the German stage. Ruthlessly the play points out the falsity of current ideas about honor, of social forms, of conventional distinctions. Its success was phenomenal, and the highest hopes were cherished of a national dramatic revival. ‹Sodoms Ende› nourished these hopes, for it showed an advance both in power and technique; but it had to be altered by the censor before it could be produced in Berlin, and it is still impossible in English. The title of the play is that given by the hero to a picture he is painting. On his way to success and fame he falls into the toils of a soulless, pleasure-loving woman, who ruins him body and soul. It was in ‹Heimath,› however, which was produced in January 1893, that Sudermann reached the height of his achievement thus far, and secured international success. The strong character of Magda, the heroine, by whose name the play is known in English, has inspired the genius of three great actresses of our time,—Modjeska, Duse, and Bernhardt,—who have spread the fame of the German dramatist through America, Italy, France, and England. Its theme is the relative duty of parent and child, and the contrast between the self-reliant broad-mindedness of a free child of the great world and the dull petty conventions of a respectable bourgeois home. Magda marks the highest point of characterization that Sudermann's creative genius has reached. The 'Schmetterlingsschlacht' lacks, not the fineness of observation, but the dramatic power, of the other plays. It is a series of debates between three girls who have supported themselves by painting butterflies on fans; two of them, grown weary of this dull life of hard-working virtue, have fallen, and with the third, who has remained virtuous and industrious, they discuss the comparative merits of their modes of living. In 1896 three of Sudermann's one-act plays were grouped together under the general title of 'Morituri.' They are entirely distinct, united only by having each the central idea of death as a liberator. In each the chief character is freed and ennobled by death; rises above himself by the will to die. Sudermann in 1897 finished his 'Johannes,'—a play which turns upon the Biblical incident of John the Baptist, Herodias, and Salome. Although it is entirely reverent in tone, it was forbidden by the Berlin censor.

An English critic has insisted that Sudermann failed to keep the promise of 'Ehre,' in that he has not continued the battle there begun against the «Spiessbürgerliches» element, the Philistinism so dear to the average German heart, against which Goethe and Schiller waged a lifelong war. It may be that he has found it easier to follow than to form the public taste; but his latest works reveal a determination to go his independent way: and it is to Sudermann that we unhesitatingly turn if asked to point out the chief international representative of the German drama at the end of the nineteenth century.

RETURNING FROM THE CONFIRMATION LESSON

From 'Dame Care.' Copyright 1891, by Harper & Brothers

When he arrived home his mother kissed him on both cheeks, and asked, «Well, was it nice?»

«Quite nice,» he answered; «and mamma, Elsbeth from the White House was there too.»

Then she blushed with joy, and asked all sorts of things: how she looked, whether she had grown pretty, and what she had said to him.

« Nothing at all,» he answered, ashamed; and as his mother looked at him surprised, he added eagerly, « but you know she is not proud.»

Next Monday when he entered the church, he found her already sitting in her place. She had the Bible lying on her knee, and was learning the verses they had been given as their task.

There were not many children there: and when he sat down opposite to her she made a half movement as if she meant to get up and come over to him; but she sat down again immediately and went on learning.

His mother had told him before he left just how to address Elsbeth. She had charged him with many greetings for her mother, and he was also to ask how she was. On his way he had studied a long speech, only he was not quite decided yet whether to address her with « Du » or « Sie.» « Du » would have been the simplest; his mother took it for granted. But the « Sie » sounded decidedly more distinguished,— so nice and grown-up. And as he could come to no decision, he avoided addressing her at all. He also took out his Bible, and both put their elbows on their knees and studied as if for a wager.

It was not of much use to him, because when the vicar questioned him afterwards he had forgotten every word of it.

A painful silence ensued; the Erdmanns laughed viciously, and he had to sit down again, his face burning with shame. He dared not look up any more; and when, on leaving the church, he saw Elsbeth standing at the porch as if she was waiting for something, he lowered his eyes and tried to pass her quickly. However, she stepped forward and spoke to him.

« My mother has charged me — I am to ask you — how your mother is?»

He answered that she was well.

«And she sends her many kind regards,» continued Elsbeth.

«And my mother also sends many kind regards to yours,» he answered, turning the Bible and hymn-book between his fingers; «and I also was to ask you how she is?»

« Mamma told me to say,» she replied, like something learned by heart, « that she is often ill, and has to keep in-doors very much; but now that spring is here she is better: and would you not like to drive in our carriage as far as your house? I was to ask you, she said.»

"Just look: Meyerhofer is sweethearting!" cried the elder Erdmann, who had hidden behind the church door, through the crack of which he wanted to tickle his companions with a little straw.

Elsbeth and Paul looked at each other in surprise, for they did not know the meaning of this phrase; but as they felt that it must signify something very bad, they blushed and separated.

Paul looked after her as she got into the carriage and drove away. This time the old lady was not waiting for her. It was her governess, he had heard. Yes: she was of such high rank that she even had a governess of her own.

"The Erdmanns will get a good licking yet:" with that he ended his reflections.

The next week passed without his speaking to Elsbeth. When he entered the church, she was generally already in her seat. Then she would nod to him kindly, but that was all.

And then came a Monday when her carriage was not waiting for her. He noticed it at once: and as he walked towards the church-yard he breathed more freely; for the proud coachman with his fur cap, which he wore even in summer, always caused him a feeling of oppression. He had only to think of this coachman when he sat opposite to her, and she appeared to him like a being from another world.

To-day he ventured to nod to her almost familiarly; and it seemed to him as if she answered more kindly than usual.

And when the lesson was ended, she came towards him of her own accord, and said, "I must walk home to-day, for our horses are all in the fields. Mamma thought you might walk with me part of the way, as we go the same road."

He felt very happy, but did not dare to walk by her side as long as they were in the village. He also looked back anxiously from time to time, to see whether the two Erdmanns were lurking anywhere with their mocking remarks. But when they went through the open fields, it was quite natural that they should walk side by side.

It was a sunny forenoon in June. The white sand on the road glittered; round about, golden hawkweed was blooming, and meadow-sweet waved in the warm wind; the midday bell sounded from the village: no human creature was to be seen far and wide; the heath seemed quite deserted.

Elsbeth wore a wide-brimmed straw hat on her head as a protection against the sun's rays. She took it off now, and swung it to and fro by the elastic.

« You will be too hot,» he said; but as she laughed at him a little he took his off also, and threw it high in the air.

« You are quite a merry fellow,» she said, nodding approvingly.

He shook his head; and the lines of care which always made him look old appeared again upon his brow.

« Oh no,» he said: « merry I am certainly not.»

« Why not ? » she asked.

« I have always so many things to think of,» he answered; « and if ever I want to be really happy, something always goes wrong.»

« But what do you always have to think about ? » she asked.

He reflected for a while, but nothing occurred to him. « Oh, it is all nonsense,» he said: « clever thoughts never come to me by any means.»

And then he told her about his brothers; of the thick books, which were quite filled with figures (the name he had forgotten), and which they had already known by heart when they were only as old as he was now.

« Why don't you learn that as well, if it gives you pleasure ? » she asked.

« But it gives me no pleasure,» he answered: « I have such a dull head.»

« But *something* you know, surely ? » she went on.

« I know absolutely nothing at all,» he replied sadly: « father says that I am too stupid.»

« Oh, you must not heed that,» she replied consolingly. « My Fräulein Rothmaier also finds fault with many things I do. But I — pah, I — » she was silent, and pulled up a sorrel-plant which she began to chew.

« Has your father still such sparkling eyes ? » he asked.

She nodded, and her face brightened.

« You love him very much — your father ? »

She looked at him wonderingly, as if she had not understood his question; then answered, « Oh yes: I love him very much.»

«And he loves you too ? »

« Well, I should think so.»

Now he also rooted up a sorrel-plant and sighed.

«Why do you sigh?» she asked.

Something was just crossing his mind, he said; and then asked laughingly if her father still took her on his knee sometimes, as on the day when he had been in the White House.

She laughed and said she was a big girl now, and he should not ask such silly questions; but afterwards it came out that all the same she still sat on her father's knee,—«Of course, not astride any more!» she added laughing.

«Yes, that was a nice day,» he said; «and I sat on his other knee. How small we must have been then.»

«And we were so pitifully stupid,» she answered: «when I think now how you wanted to whistle, and could not!»

«Do you remember that?» he asked; and his eyes sparkled in the consciousness of his present attainments in the art.

«Of course,» she replied; «and when you went away you came running back and—do you still remember?»

He remembered very well.

«Now you can whistle, of course,» she laughed: «at our age that is no longer an accomplishment,—even I can do it;» and she pointed her lips in a very funny manner.

He was sad that she spoke so slightingly of his art, and reflected whether it would not be better to give up whistling altogether.

«Why are you so silent?» she asked. «Are you tired too?»

«Oh no; but you—eh?»

Yes: the walk through the sand and the noontide heat had tired her.

«Then come into our house and rest,» he cried with sparkling eyes; for he thought what joy his mother would feel at seeing her.

But she refused. «Your father is not kindly disposed towards us, mamma said; and that's why you may not come for a visit to Helenenthal. Your father would perhaps send me away.»

He replied with a deep blush, «My father would not do that;» and felt much ashamed.

She cast a glance towards the Haidehof, which lay scarcely a hundred yards from the road. The red fence shone in the sunshine, and even the gray half-ruined barns looked more cheerful than usual.

«Your house looks very nice,» she said, shading her eyes with her hand.

«Oh yes,» he answered, his heart swelling with pride; «and there is an owl nailed to the door of one of the sheds. But it shall become much nicer still,» he added after a little while, seriously, «only let me begin to rule.» And then he set to work to explain to her all his plans for the future. She listened attentively, but when he had finished she said again:—

«I am tired—I must rest;» and she wanted to sit down on the edge of the ditch.

«Not here in the blazing sun,» he cautioned her: «we'll look out for the first juniper-bush we can find.»

She gave him her hand, and let him drag her wearily over the heath, which undulated with mole-hills like the waves on a lake; and near the edge of the wood there were some solitary juniper-bushes, which stood out like a group of black dwarfs above the level plain.

Under the first of these bushes she cowered down, so that its shadow almost entirely shrouded her slight, delicate figure.

«Here is just room enough for your head,» she said, pointing to a mole-hill which was just within range of the shade.

He stretched himself out on the grass, his head resting on the mole-hill, his forehead covered by the hem of her dress.

She leaned back on the bush in order to find support in its branches.

«The needles don't prick at all,» she said: «they mean well by us. I believe we could pass through the Sleeping Beauty's hedge of thorns.»

«You—not I,» he answered, lifting his eyes to her from his recumbent position: «every thorn has pricked me. I am no fairy prince; not even a simple Hans in luck, am I?»

«That will all come in time,» she replied consolingly: «you must not always have sad thoughts.»

He wanted to reply, but he lacked the right words; and as he looked up meditatively, a swallow flitted through the blue sky. Then involuntarily he uttered a whistle, as if he wanted to call it; and as it did not come, he whistled again, and for a second and third time.

Elsbeth laughed, but he went on whistling—first without knowing how, and without reflecting why; but when one tone after the other flowed from his lips, he felt as if he had become very eloquent all of a sudden, and as if in this manner he could say all that weighed on his heart, and for which in words he never could have found courage. All that which made him sad, all that which he cared about, came pouring forth. He shut his eyes and listened, so to speak, to what the tones were saying for him. He thought that the good God in heaven spoke for him, and was relating all that concerned him, even that which he had never been clear about himself.

When he looked up, he did not know how long he had been lying there whistling; but he saw that Elsbeth was crying.

"Why do you cry?" he asked.

She did not answer him; but dried her eyes with her handkerchief, and rose.

Silently they walked side by side for a while. When they reached the wood, which lay thick and dark before them, she stopped and asked:—

"Who has taught you that?"

"Nobody," he said: "it came to me quite naturally."

"Can you also play the flute?" she went on.

No, he could not: he had never even heard it; he only knew that it was the favorite pastime of "Old Fritz."

"You must learn it," she said.

He thought it would probably be too difficult for him.

"You shall try all the same," she counseled him; "you must be an artist—a great artist."

He was startled when she said that; he scarcely dared to follow out her thoughts.

When they reached the other side of the wood they separated. She went towards the White House, and he went back. When he passed the juniper-bush where they had both been sitting, all seemed to him like a dream; and henceforth it always remained so to him. Two or three days elapsed before he dared to say anything of his adventure to his mother, but then he could contain himself no longer: he confessed everything to her.

His mother looked at him for a long time, and then went out; but from that time she used to listen secretly, to catch if possible some notes of his whistling.

The two children often walked home together; but such an hour as the one beneath the juniper-bush never came to them again.

[Upon Paul, Dame Care lays more and heavier burdens with each advancing year. Out of unquestioning devotion to his responsibilities, he renounces all claims to personal happiness; and he and Elsbeth drift apart. Only when he is brought to trial for a noble but punishable act, does she reappear as his good angel.]

THE TRIAL

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The lawyer for the defense had ended. A murmur went through the wide court of the assizes, the galleries of which were crammed with spectators.

If the accused did not spoil the effect of the brilliant speech by an imprudent word, he was saved.

The president's answer resounded unheard.

And now the eye-glasses and opera-glasses began to click. All eyes were directed to the pale, simply clad man who was sitting in the same dock where, eight years ago, the vicious servant had sat.

The president asked whether the accused had anything more to add, to strengthen the proof of his innocence.

« Silence! silence! » was murmured through the court.

But Paul rose and spoke,—first low and hesitatingly, then every moment with greater firmness.

« I am heartily sorry that the trouble my defender has taken to save me should have been useless; but I am not as innocent of the deed as he represents. »

The judges looked at each other. « What is he about? He is going to speak against himself! »

He said: «Anxiety made me nearly unconscious. I then acted in a kind of madness which at that moment rendered me incapable of calculation. »

« He is cutting his own throat! » said the audience.

« I have all my life been shy and oppressed, and have felt as if I could look nobody in the face, though I had nothing to conceal; but if this time I behave in a cowardly manner, I believe I should be less able to do so than ever,—and this time I should have good reason enough for it. My defender has also represented my former life as a pattern of all virtues. But this was not so, either. I lacked dignity and self-possession; I passed over too much as regards both other people and myself: and that has always rankled in my mind, though I was never clear about it. Too much has weighed upon me to enable me ever to breathe freely as a man should, if he does not want to grow dull and care-laden. This deed has made me free, and has given me that which I lacked so long; it has been a great happiness to me: and should I be so ungrateful as to deny it to-day? No; I will not do that. Let them imprison me as long as they like. I shall abide my time and begin a new life.

"And so I must say I have set fire to my belongings in full consciousness; I was never more in my senses than at the moment when I poured the petroleum over my sheaves; and if to-day I were to be in the same position, God knows I should do the same again. Why should I not? What I destroyed was the work of my own hands; I had created it after long years of hard toil, and could do with it what I liked. I well know that the law is of a different opinion, and therefore I shall quietly go to prison for my time. But who else suffered by the injury except myself? My sisters were well provided for, and my father"—he stopped a moment, and his voice shook as he continued—"yes, would it not have been better if my old father had passed the last years of his life in peace and tranquillity with one of his daughters than where I am now going?

"Fate would not have it so. A stroke killed him; and my brothers say that I was his murderer. But my brothers have no right at all to judge about that: they know neither me nor my father. All their lives they have been concerned with themselves only, and have let *me* alone care for my father, mother, and sisters, house and farm; and I was only good enough when they wanted something. They turn away from me to-day; but they can never be more estranged from me in the future than they have always been in the past.

"My sisters"—he turned towards the witness-box, where Greta and Kate sat crying with covered faces, and his voice grew softer as if from suppressed tears—"my sisters won't have anything to do with me any more, but I gladly forgive them: they are women, and made of more delicate metal; also, there are two men standing behind them who find it very easy to be indignant at my monstrous deed. They have all abandoned me now;—no, not all,"—a bright look crossed his face,—"but that need not be mentioned here. But one thing I will say, even though I be considered a murderer: I do not repent that my father died through my deed; I loved him more when I killed him than if I had let him live. He was old and weak, and what awaited him was shame and dishonor; he lived such a quiet life, and would have miserably dwindled away here: surely it was better death should come to him like lightning, that kills people in the middle of their happiness. That is my opinion. I have settled it with my conscience, and have no need to render account to any one but to God and to myself. Now you may condemn me."

"Bravo!" cried a thundering voice in the court from the witness-box.

It was Douglas.

His gigantic figure stood erect, his eyes sparkled beneath his bushy brows; and when the president called him to order, he sat down defiantly and said to his neighbor, "I can be proud of him — eh?"

FREED FROM DAME CARE

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Two years later, on a bright morning in June, the red-painted gate of the prison opened and let out a prisoner, who with a laugh on his face was blinking his eyes in the bright sun, as if trying to learn to bear the light again. He swung the bundle which he carried to and fro, and looked carelessly to the right and the left, like one who was not decided which direction to follow, but for whom, on the whole, it was unimportant whither he strayed.

When he passed the front of the prison building, he saw a carriage standing there which appeared known to him; for he stopped and seemed to be reflecting. Then he turned to the coachman, who in his tasseled fur cap nodded haughtily from the box.

"Is anybody from Helenenthal here?" he asked.

"Yes: master and the young lady. They have come to fetch Mr. Meyerhofer."

And directly after was heard from the steps: —

"Hey, holloa! there he is already — Elsbeth, see! there he is already."

Paul jumped up the steps, and the two men lay in each other's arms.

Then the heavy folding-doors were opened softly and timidly, and let out a slender female figure clad in black, who, with a melancholy smile, leaned against the wall and quietly waited until the men unclasped each other.

« There, you have him, Elsbeth! » shouted the old man.

Hand in hand they stood opposite each other, and looked in one another's eyes; then she leaned her head on his breast and whispered, « Thank God that I am with you again! »

«And in order that you may have each other all to yourself, children,» said the old man, « you two shall drive home; and I will meanwhile drink a bottle of claret to the health of my successor. I am well off, for I retire from business this day.»

« Mr. Douglas! » exclaimed Paul, terrified.

«*Father*, I am called — do you understand? Let me be fetched towards evening. You are now master at home. Good-by.»

With that he strode down the steps.

« Come,» said Paul gently, with downcast eyes. Elsbeth went after him with a shy smile; for now when they were alone, neither dared to approach the other.

And then they drove silently out on to the sunny, flowery heath. Wild pinks, bluebells, and ground-ivy wove themselves into a many-colored carpet; and the white meadow-sweet lifted its waving blossoms, as if snowflakes had been strewn on the flowers. The leaves of the weeping willow rustled softly, and like a net of sparkling ribbons the little streams flowed along beneath their branches. The warm air trembled, and yellow butterflies fluttered up and down in couples.

Paul leaned back in the cushions, and gazed with half-shut eyes at this profusion of charming sights.

«Are you happy?» asked Elsbeth, leaning towards him.

« I don't know,» he answered: « it is too much for me.»

She smiled: she well understood him.

« See there, our home! » she said, pointing to the White House, which stood out clear in the distance. He pressed her hand, but his voice failed him.

At the edge of the wood the carriage had to stop. Both got out and proceeded on foot.

Then he saw that she carried a little white parcel under her arm, which he had not seen before.

« What is that? » he asked.

« You will soon see,» she answered, while a serious smile crossed her face.

«A surprise?»

«A remembrance.» . .

When they approached the opposite edge of the wood, he said, pointing to two trees which stood twenty steps away from the road:—

«Here is the place where I found you lying in your hammock.»

«Yes,» she said: «it was there also that I found out for the first time that I should never be able to do without you.»

«And there is the juniper-tree,» he continued, when they stepped out into the fields, «where we—» and then he suddenly cried aloud, and stretched out both his hands into space.

«What is the matter?» she exclaimed anxiously, looking up at him. He had turned deathly pale, and his lips quivered.

«It is gone,» he stammered.

«What?»

«It—it—my own.»

Where once the buildings of the Haidehof rose, there now stretched a level plain; only a few trees spread out their miserable branches.

He could not accustom himself to this sight, and covered his face with his hands, while he shivered feverishly.

«Do not be sad,» she pleaded. «Papa would not have it rebuilt before you could make your own arrangements.»

«Let us go there,» he said.

«Please, please not,» she replied: «there is nothing to be seen except a few heaps of ruins—at another time when you are not so excited.»

«But where shall I sleep?»

«In the same room in which you were born—I have had it arranged for you, and your mother's furniture put in. Can you still say now that you have lost your home?»

He pressed her hand gratefully; but she pointed to the juniper-bush, which had struck them before.

«Let us go there,» she said; «lay your head on the mole-hill and whistle something. Do you remember?»

«I should think so!»

«How long is it since then?»

«Seventeen years.»

«O heavens, I have loved you so long already, and in the mean time have become an old maid! And I have waited for you from year to year, but you would not see it. 'He must come at last,' I thought; but you did not come. And then I was discouraged, and thought, 'You cannot force yourself upon him;

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in reality he does not want you at all. You must come to some resolution.' And to put an end to all my longings, I accepted my cousin, who for the last ten years had been dangling after me. He had made me laugh so often, and I thought he would — but enough of this — » and she shuddered. « Come, lie down — whistle. »

He shook his head, and pointed with his hand silently across the heath, where, on the horizon, three lonely fir-trees stretched their rough arms towards the sky.

« Thither, » he said. « I cannot rest ere I have been there. »

« You are right, » she replied; and hand in hand they walked through the blooming heather, over which the wild bees were swarming, sleepily humming.

When they entered the cemetery the clock at the White House was striking noon. Twelve times it sounded in short strokes; a soft echo quivered in the air, and then all was quiet again: only the humming and singing continued.

His mother's grave was overgrown with ivy and wild myrtle, and at its head rose the radiant blossom of a golden-rod. Between the leaves rust-colored ants were creeping, and a lizard rustled down into the green depths.

Silently they both stood there, and Paul trembled. Neither dared to interrupt the solemn stillness.

« Where have they buried my father? » Paul asked at last.

« Your sisters took the body over to Lotkeim, » answered Elsbeth.

« That is as well, » he replied. « She has been lonely all her life: let her be so in death too. But to-morrow we will also go over to him. »

« Will you go and see your sisters? »

He shook his head sadly. Then they relapsed into silence.

He leaned his head on his hands and cried.

« Do not cry, » she said: « each one of you has now a home. » And then she took the little parcel that she held under her arm, unfastened the white paper of the cover, and there appeared an old manuscript book with torn cover and faded leaves.

« See, » she cried, « she sends you this,— her greeting. »

« Where did you get it from? » he asked surprised, for he had recognized his mother's handwriting.

« It lay in an old chest of drawers which was saved from the fire, squeezed between the drawers and the back. It seems to have been lying there ever since her death. »

Then they sat down together on the grave, laid the book between them on their knees, and began to study it. Now he remembered that Katie, at the time when he surprised her with her lover, had spoken of a song-book which had belonged to their mother; but he had never made up his mind to ask after it, because he did not want to bring to life again the painful remembrance of that hour.

All sorts of old songs were in it, copied out neatly; near them others half scratched out and corrected. The latter she seemed to have reproduced from memory, or perhaps composed herself. . . .

And directly after stood written, in big letters, this title:—

THE FAIRY TALE OF DAME CARE

THERE was once a mother, to whom the good God had given a son; but she was so poor and lonely that she had nobody who could stand godmother to him. And she sighed, and said, « Where shall I get a godmother from?»

Then one evening at dusk there came a woman to her house who was dressed in gray and had a gray veil over her head. She said, «I will be your son's godmother, and I will take care that he grows up a good man, and does not let you starve; but you must give me his soul.»

Then his mother trembled, and said, «Who are you?»

«I am Dame Care,» answered the gray woman; and the mother wept; but as she suffered much from hunger, she gave the woman her son's soul, and she was his godmother.

And her son grew up and worked hard to procure her bread. But as he had no soul, he had no joy and no youth; and often he looked at his mother with reproachful eyes, as if he would ask:—

« Mother, where is my soul?»

Then the mother grew sad, and went out to find him a soul.

She asked the stars in the sky, «Will you give me a soul?» But they said, «He is too low for that.»

And she asked the flowers on the heath: they said, «He is too ugly.»

And she asked the birds in the trees: they said, «He is too sad.»

And she asked the high trees: they said, «He is too humble.»

And she asked the clever serpents; but they said, «He is too stupid.»

Then she went away weeping. And in the wood she met a young and beautiful princess surrounded by her court.

And because she saw the mother weeping, she descended from her horse, and took her to the castle, which was all built of gold and precious stones.

There she asked, «Tell me why you weep?» And the mother told the princess of her grief, that she could not procure her son a soul, nor joy and youth.

Then said the princess, «I cannot see anybody weep: I will tell you something — I will give him my soul.»

Then the mother fell down before her and kissed her hands.

«But,» said the princess, «I will not do it for nothing: he must ask me for it.» Then the mother went to her son; but Dame Care had laid her gray veil over his head, so that he was blind and could not see the princess.

And the mother pleaded, «Dear Dame Care, set him free.»

But Care smiled, — and whoever saw her smile was forced to weep, — and she said, «He must free himself.»

«How can he do that?» asked the mother.

«He must sacrifice to me all that he loves,» said Dame Care.

Then the mother grieved very much, and lay down and died. But the princess waits for her suitor to this very day.

«Mother, mother!» he cried; and sank down on the grave.

«Come,» said Elsbeth, struggling with her tears, as she laid her hand on his shoulder; «let mother be, — she is at peace. And she shall not harm us any more — your wicked Dame Care!»

EUGÈNE SUE

(1804–1857)

The fame of Eugène Sue as the author of two works, 'The Wandering Jew' and 'The Mysteries of Paris,' has spread far beyond his own country. He wrote upwards of forty other novels; he was very much of a personage in the social and intellectual life of his day, when romanticism was popular in the literature of several lands. But those two fictions are now his passport to consideration. They were extravagantly lauded in their time; their vogue was great. Judged critically they have faults enough; but their conspicuous merits can be detected almost as easily now as when they were written, half a century ago. Detached from their time, they have permanent qualities for success. Sue was a man of cultivation and social position, of much and close observation: he had seen many men and many things. Moreover he was a born story-teller, who had the knack of vivid presentation, the feeling for drama. Again, in his middle life he became interested in socialistic ideas, and gave attention to the state of the Parisian working-folk,— of the poor and outcast. He put them into his fiction with lavish detail, with sympathy and picturesque power. It was a novel thing in fiction. It gave Sue's stories what would now be called a «purpose» flavor. It lent fascination and *raison d'être* to his work. Sue was, like Dumas, an improviser, and possessed remarkable fecundity and invention. To these qualities add the instinct for portraying the weird and the terrible, and it is not hard to understand why he was popular in his day, and retains a good share of that popularity still.

EUGÈNE SUE

Both his father and grandfather were distinguished surgeons in the navy. Eugène — Marie Joseph was his baptismal name, but he took that of Eugène because Prince Eugène Beauharnais and the Empress Joséphine were his sponsors — was born in Paris on December 10th, 1804, and was sent to a city school. As a lad he was full of pranks and of a lively wit. He was educated to his father's profession, and when twenty-three went aboard ship as a surgeon. Six years he spent in the navy, storing up impressions and experiences. He retired upon the death of his father in 1830, which made him heir to a large fortune. At this juncture Sue was a fashionable young fellow, with every temptation to become an idle man-about-town; but there was good stuff in him, and he had a desire to exercise his talents.

His turning to literature seemed accidental. At the opera one evening, a friend who edited a dramatic paper suggested to Sue a plot for a nautical tale. The latter went home and wrote it out, and the editor and his readers liked it. This furnished the necessary impulse for a series of novels, in which Sue made use of his naval life, introducing a good deal of exotic color — as Pierre Loti was to do later. 'Plick and Plock' (1831) was the first; and 'Kernock the Pirate,' 'Attar Gull,' and 'La Coucaratcha,' are other representative works of the class. They have the negligences and extravagances of the hasty writer of talent; and situations and heroes have a tendency to be Byronic. Their reception was flattering. Sue became a literary idol; not only read by the multitude, but praised by the best critics. Sainte-Beuve declared of these earlier stories that Sue had been the first French writer to venture on the sea story, and to discover the Mediterranean for literature. He was hailed as the French Cooper.

A tone of worldliness and skepticism characterized Sue at this stage of his career,— a mood to be thrown off in subsequent and more earnest fiction. A period was put to his use of the sea by a five-volume 'History of the French Navy,' which appeared in 1837, and would perhaps have been taken more seriously had the author's reputation as a romancer been less firmly established. After trying his hand at historical romances like 'Latréaumont' and 'Jean Cavalier,' Sue became imbued gradually with socialistic doctrine, and under this influence wrote 'The Mysteries of Paris' (1842) and 'The Wandering Jew' (1844–5). There is no question about the boldness and brilliancy of conception in these books, nor of their earnestness of intention and varied attraction. The former is not so much a close-knit novel as a great number of loosely connected episodes and pictures. Sue is eminently episodical; his canvas is a vast one, and he crowds it with figures. Yet such is his gift that this social kaleidoscope leaves distinct impressions; his moving scenes enthrall the beholder. He is facile rather than deep; but his representation of social misery and depravity in France did good in arousing people's minds to the facts, as did Dickens's representation of similar evils in England. In 'The Wandering Jew,' the central idea of the wretch doomed to wander for centuries from land to land, leaving woe in his

tracks, is handled allegorically to suggest the release of this symbolic personage as typical of the future release of humanity from all its social bondage. In this romance again Sue is rambling and diffuse, and lacks unity of construction. But there is genuine grandeur at times, and much that is strong and striking. Such a work must always command a wide audience,— witness the many editions and translations. When these two romances were given to the public, the romanticism of Dumas the elder on the one hand, and of Hugo on the other,— the body and soul of the romantic,— was in the air. Sue in both manner and matter contributed to this school of writers. He had something of the narrative gift of Dumas, and of the ethical earnestness of Hugo.

Eugène Sue's sympathy with radicalism was illustrated in practical life when he sat for Paris in the Assembly of 1850,—being elected by a very large majority. The child whose sponsors were royalty, and whose early works savored strongly of court life and intrigue, had come a long journey. The Coup d'État of 1852 drove him into exile at Annecy in Switzerland, where he spent the remaining years to his death on July 3d, 1857. This final period was active so far as the making of novels is concerned: some eight or ten stories were published, one posthumously; but they added nothing to his reputation, though showing that the increase of years had little effect upon his fertility. But it is Eugène Sue's production during his middle period — the manner and motive of ‘The Mysteries of Paris’ and ‘The Wandering Jew’—that make him an attractive figure, a favorite writer of romance.

THE LAND'S END OF TWO WORLDS

From ‘The Wandering Jew’

The Arctic Ocean encircles with a belt of eternal ice the desert confines of Siberia and North America — the uttermost limits of the Old and New Worlds, separated by the narrow channel known as Bering's Straits.

The last days of September have arrived.

The equinox has brought with it darkness and northern storms, and night will quickly close the short and dismal polar day. The sky, of a dull and leaden blue, is faintly lighted by a sun without warmth, whose white disk, scarcely seen above the horizon, pales before the dazzling brilliancy of the snow that covers, as far as the eyes can reach, the boundless steppes.

To the north, this desert is bounded by a ragged coast, bristling with huge black rocks.

At the base of this Titanic mass lies enchained the petrified ocean, whose spell-bound waves appear fixed as vast ranges of ice mountains; their blue peaks fading away in the far-off frost smoke, or snow vapor.

Between the twin peaks of Cape East, the termination of Siberia, the sullen sea is seen to drive tall icebergs across a streak of dead green. There lies Bering's Straits.

Opposite, and towering over the channel, rise the granite masses of Cape Prince of Wales, the headland of North America.

These lonely latitudes do not belong to the habitable world: for the piercing cold shivers the stones, splits the trees, and causes the earth to burst asunder; which, throwing forth showers of icy spangles, seems capable of enduring this solitude of frost and tempest, of famine and death.

And yet, strange to say, footprints may be traced on the snow covering these headlands on either side of Bering's Straits.

On the American shore the footprints are small and light, thus betraying the passage of a woman.

She has been hastening up the rocky peak, whence the drifts of Siberia are visible.

On the latter ground, footprints larger and deeper betoken the passing of a man. He also was on his way to the Straits.

It would seem that this man and woman had arrived here from opposite directions, in hope of catching a glimpse of one another across the arm of the sea dividing the two worlds — the Old and the New.

More strange still! the man and the woman have crossed the solitudes during a terrific storm. Black pines, the growth of centuries, pointing their bent heads in different parts of the solitude like crosses in a church-yard, have been uprooted, rent, and hurled aside by the blasts!

Yet the two travelers face this furious tempest, which has plucked up trees, and pounded the frozen masses into splinters, with the roar of thunder.

They face it, without for one single instant deviating from the straight line hitherto followed by them.

Who then are these two beings, who advance thus calmly amidst the storms and convulsions of nature?

Is it by chance, or design, or destiny, that the seven nails in the sole of the man's shoe form a cross — thus:

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* * *

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Everywhere he leaves this impress behind him.

On the smooth and polished snow, these footmarks seem imprinted by a foot of brass on a marble floor.

Night without twilight has soon succeeded day — a night of foreboding gloom.

The brilliant reflection of the snow renders the white steppes still visible beneath the azure darkness of the sky; and the pale stars glimmer on the obscure and frozen dome.

Solemn silence reigns.

But towards the Straits a faint light appears.

At first, a gentle, bluish light, such as precedes moonrise; it increases in brightness, and assumes a ruddy hue.

Darkness thickens in every other direction: the white wilds of the desert are now scarcely visible under the black vault of the firmament.

Strange and confused noises are heard amidst this obscurity.

They sound like the flight of large night birds: now flapping — now heavily skimming over the steppes — now descending.

But no cry is heard.

The silent terror heralds the approach of one of those imposing phenomena that awe alike the most ferocious and the most harmless of animated beings. An Aurora Borealis, (magnificent sight!) common in the polar regions, suddenly beams forth.

A half-circle of dazzling whiteness becomes visible in the horizon. Immense columns of light stream forth from this dazzling centre, rising to a great height, illuminating earth, sea, and sky. Then a brilliant reflection, like the blaze of a conflagration, steals over the snow of the desert, purples the summits of the mountains of ice, and imparts a dark-red hue to the black rocks of both continents.

After attaining this magnificent brilliancy, the Aurora faded away gradually, and its vivid glow was lost in a luminous fog.

Just then, by a wondrous mirage,—an effect very common in high latitudes,—the American coast, though separated from Siberia by a broad arm of the sea, loomed so close that a bridge might seemingly be thrown from one world to the other.

Then human forms appeared in the transparent azure haze overspreading both forelands.

On the Siberian cape, a man on his knees stretched his arms towards America, with an expression of inconceivable despair.

On the American promontory, a young and handsome woman replied to the man's despairing gesture by pointing to heaven.

For some seconds, these two tall figures stood out, pale and shadowy, in the farewell gleams of the Aurora.

But the fog thickens, and all is lost in darkness.

Whence came the two beings, who met thus amidst polar glaciers at the extremities of the Old and New Worlds?

Who were the two creatures, brought near for a moment by a deceitful mirage, but who seemed eternally separated?

THE PANTHER FIGHT

From ‹The Wandering Jew›

The pantomime opening, by which was introduced the combat of Morok with the black panther, was so unmeaning that the majority of the audience paid no attention to it, reserving all their interest for the scene in which the lion-tamer was to make his appearance.

This indifference of the public explains the curiosity excited in the theatre by the arrival of Faringhea and Djalma; a curiosity which expressed itself (as at this day, when uncommon foreigners appear in public) by a slight murmur and general movement amongst the crowd. The sprightly, pretty face of Rose-Pompon—always charming, in spite of her singularly staring dress, in style so ridiculous for such a theatre, and her light and familiar manner towards the handsome Indian who accompanied her—increased and animated the general surprise; for at this moment Rose-Pompon, yielding without reserve to a movement of teasing coquetry, had held up, as we have already stated, her large bunch of roses to Djalma. But the prince, at sight of the landscape which reminded him of his country, instead of appearing sensible to this pretty provocation, remained for some minutes as in a dream, with his eyes fixed upon the stage. Then Rose-Pompon began to beat time on the front of the box with her bouquet, whilst the somewhat too visible movement of her pretty shoulders showed that this devoted dancer was thinking of fast-life dances, as the orchestra struck up a more lively strain.

Placed directly opposite the box in which Faringhea, Djalma, and Rose-Pompon had just taken their seats, Lady Morinval soon perceived the arrival of these two personages, and particularly the eccentric coquetries of Rose-Pompon. Immediately the young marchioness, leaning over towards Mademoiselle de Cardoville, who was still absorbed in memories ineffable, said to her, laughing, « My dear, the most amusing part of the performance is not upon the stage. Look just opposite.»

«Just opposite ?» repeated Adrienne mechanically; and turning towards Lady Morinval with an air of surprise, she glanced in the direction pointed out.

She looked — what did she see ? — Djalma seated by the side of a young woman, who was familiarly offering to his sense of smell the perfume of her bouquet. Amazed — struck almost literally to the heart, as by an electric shock, swift, sharp, and painful — Adrienne became deadly pale. From instinct, she shut her eyes for a second in order *not to see* — as men try to ward off the dagger, which, having once dealt the blow, threatens to strike again. Then suddenly, to this feeling of grief succeeded a reflection terrible both to her love and to her wounded pride.

« Djalma is present with this woman, though he must have received my letter,» she said to herself, « wherein he was informed of the happiness that awaited him.»

At the idea of so cruel an insult, a blush of shame and indignation displaced the paleness of Adrienne; who, overwhelmed by this sad reality, said to herself, « Rodin did not deceive me.»

We abandon all idea of picturing the lightning-like rapidity of certain emotions, which in a moment may torture — may kill you in the space of a minute. Thus Adrienne was precipitated from the most radiant happiness to the lowest depths of an abyss of the most heart-rending grief, in less than a second; for a second had hardly elapsed before she replied to Lady Morinval: « What is there then so curious, opposite to us, my dear Julia ?»

This evasive question gave Adrienne time to recover her self-possession. Fortunately, thanks to the thick folds of hair which almost entirely concealed her cheeks, the rapid and sudden changes from pallor to blush escaped the notice of Lady Morinval, who gayly replied, « What, my dear, do you not perceive those East-Indians who have just entered the box immediately opposite to ours? There, just before us! »

« Yes, I see them; but what then? » replied Adrienne in a firm tone.

«And don't you observe anything remarkable? » said the marchioness.

« Don't be too hard, ladies,» laughingly interposed the marquis: « we ought to allow the poor foreigners some little indulgence. They are ignorant of our manners and customs: were it not for that, they would never appear in the face of all Paris in such dubious company.»

« Indeed,» said Adrienne, with a bitter smile: « their simplicity is touching; we must pity them.»

«And unfortunately the girl is charming, spite of her low dress and bare arms,» said the marchioness; « she cannot be more than sixteen or seventeen at most. Look at her, my dear Adrienne; what a pity! »

« It is one of your charitable days, my dear Julia,» answered Adrienne: « we are to pity the Indians, to pity this creature, and — pray, whom else are we to pity? »

« We will not pity that handsome Indian in his red-and-gold turban,» said the marquis laughing; « for if this goes on, the girl with the cherry-colored ribbons will be giving him a kiss. See how she leans towards her sultan.»

« They are very amusing,» said the marchioness, sharing the hilarity of her husband, and looking at Rose-Pompon through her glass; then she resumed in about a minute, addressing herself to Adrienne, « I am quite certain of one thing. Notwithstanding her giddy airs, that girl is very fond of her Indian. I just saw a look that expresses a great deal.»

« Why so much penetration, my dear Julia? » said Adrienne mildly: « what interest have we in reading the heart of that girl? »

« Why, if she loves her sultan, she is quite in the right,» said the marquis, looking through his opera-glass in turn; « for in my whole life I never saw a more handsome fellow than that Indian.

I can only catch his side-face, but the profile is pure and fine as an antique cameo. Do you not think so?» added the marquis, leaning towards Adrienne. «Of course it is only as a matter of art that I permit myself to ask you the question.»

«As a work of *art*,» answered Adrienne, «it is certainly very fine.»

«But see!» said the marchioness: «how impertinent the little creature is! She is actually staring at us.»

«Well!» said the marquis; «and she is actually laying her hand quite unceremoniously on her sultan's shoulder—to make him share, no doubt, in her admiration of you ladies.»

In fact, Djalma, until now occupied with the contemplation of the scene which reminded him of his country, had remained insensible to the enticements of Rose-Pompon, and had not yet perceived Adrienne.

«Well now!» said Rose-Pompon, bustling herself about in front of the box, and continuing to stare at Mademoiselle de Cardoville,—for it was she and not the marchioness who now drew her attention: «that is something quite out of the common way,—a pretty woman with red hair; but such a sweet red, it must be owned. Look, Prince Charming!»

And so saying, she tapped Djalma lightly on the shoulder: he started at these words, turned round, and for the first time perceived Mademoiselle de Cardoville.

Though he had been almost prepared for this meeting, the prince was so violently affected by it that he was about involuntarily to rise, in a state of the utmost confusion; but he felt the iron hand of Faringhea laid heavily on his shoulder, and heard him whisper in Hindostanee, «Courage! and by to-morrow she will be at your feet.»

As Djalma still struggled to rise, the half-caste added, to restrain him, «Just now she grew pale and red with jealousy. No weakness, or all is lost!»

«So! there you are again, talking your dreadful gibberish,» said Rose-Pompon, turning round toward Faringhea. «First of all, it is not polite; and then the language is so odd, that one might suppose you were cracking nuts.»

«I spoke of you to my master,» said the half-caste: «he is preparing a surprise for you.»

«A surprise? oh! that is different. Only make haste—do you hear, Prince Charming!» added she, looking tenderly at Djalma.

« My heart is breaking,» said Djalma, in a hollow voice to Faringhea, still using the language of India.

« But to-morrow it will bound with joy and love,» answered the half-caste. « It is only by disdain that you can conquer a proud woman. To-morrow, I tell you, she will be trembling, confused, supplicating, at your feet! »

« To-morrow she will hate me like death! » replied the prince mournfully.

« Yes, were she now to see you weak and cowardly. It is now too late to draw back: look full at her, take the nosegay from this girl, and raise it to your lips. Instantly you will see yonder woman, proud as she is, grow pale and red, as just now. Then will you believe me? »

Reduced by despair to make almost any attempt, and fascinated in spite of himself by the diabolical hints of Faringhea, Djalma looked for a second full at Mademoiselle de Cardoville; then with a trembling hand he took the bouquet from Rose-Pompon, and again looking at Adrienne, pressed it to his lips.

Upon this insolent bravado, Mademoiselle de Cardoville could not restrain so sudden and visible a pang that the prince was struck by it.

« She is yours,» said the half-caste to him. « Did you see, my lord, how she trembled with jealousy? Only have courage, and she is yours. She would soon prefer you to that handsome young man behind her — for *it is he* whom she has hitherto fancied herself in love with.»

As if the half-caste had guessed the movement of rage and hatred which this revelation would excite in the heart of the prince, he hastily added, « Calmness and disdain! Is it not his turn now to hate you? »

The prince restrained himself, and drew his hand across his forehead, which glowed with anger.

« There now! what are you telling him that vexes him so? » said Rose-Pompon to Faringhea, with pouting lip. Then addressing Djalma, she continued, « Come, Prince Charming, as they say in the fairy tale,— give me back my flowers.»

As she took the bouquet again, she added, « You have kissed it, and I could almost eat it.» Then with a sigh, and a passionate glance at Djalma, she said softly to herself, « That monster Ninny Moulin did not deceive me. All this is *quite proper;* I have not even *that* to reproach myself with.» And with her little white teeth she bit at a rosy nail of her right hand, from which she had just drawn the glove.

It is hardly necessary to say that Adrienne's letter had not been delivered to the prince, and that he had not gone to pass the day in the country with Marshal Simon. During the three days in which Montbron had not seen Djalma, Faringhea had persuaded him that by affecting another passion, he would bring Mademoiselle de Cardoville to terms. With regard to Djalma's presence at the theatre, Rodin had learned from her maid Florine that her mistress was to go in the evening to the Porte-Saint-Martin. Before Djalma had recognized her, Adrienne, who felt her strength failing her, was on the point of quitting the theatre: the man whom she had hitherto placed so high, whom she had regarded as a hero and a demigod, and whom she had imagined plunged in such dreadful despair that, led by the most tender pity, she had written to him with simple frankness, that a sweet hope might calm his grief,—replied to a generous mark of sincerity and love by making himself a ridiculous spectacle with a creature unworthy of him.

What incurable wounds for Adrienne's pride! It mattered little whether Djalma knew or not that she would be a spectator of the indignity. But when she saw herself recognized by the prince, when he carried the insult so far as to look full at her, and at the same time raise to his lips the bouquet of the creature who accompanied him, Adrienne was seized with noble indignation, and felt sufficient courage to remain; instead of closing her eyes to evidence, she found a sort of barbarous pleasure in assisting at the agony and death of her pure and divine love. With head erect, proud and flashing eye, flushed cheek, and curling lip, she looked in her turn at the prince with disdainful steadiness. It was with a sardonic smile that she said to the marchioness, who, like many others of the spectators, was occupied with what was passing in the stage-box, « This revolting exhibition of savage manners is at least in accordance with the rest of the performance.»

« Certainly,» said the marchioness; « and my dear uncle will have lost, perhaps, the most amusing part.»

« Montbron ?» said Adrienne hastily, with hardly repressed bitterness: « yes, he will regret not having *seen all.* I am impatient for his arrival. Is it not to him that I am indebted for this charming evening ?»

Perhaps Madame de Morinval would have remarked the expression of bitter irony that Adrienne could not altogether dissemble, if suddenly a hoarse and prolonged roar had not attracted her attention, as well as that of the rest of the audience, who had hitherto been quite indifferent to the scenes intended for an introduction to the appearance of Morok. Every eye was now turned instinctively towards the cavern, situated to the left of the stage, just below Mademoiselle de Cardoville's box; a thrill of curiosity ran through the house.

A second roar, deeper and more sonorous, and apparently expressive of more irritation, than the first, now rose from the cave; the mouth of which was half hidden by artificial brambles, made so as to be easily put on one side. At this sound the Englishman stood up in his little box, leaned half over the front, and began to rub his hands with great energy; then remaining perfectly motionless, he fixed his large, green, glittering eyes on the mouth of the cavern.

At these ferocious howlings, Djalma also had started, notwithstanding the frenzy of love, hate, and jealousy to which he was a prey. The sight of this forest, and the roarings of the panther, filled him with deep emotion; for they recalled the remembrance of his country, and of those great hunts which, like war, have their own terrible excitement. Had he suddenly heard the horns and gongs of his father's army sounding to the charge, he could not have been transported with more savage ardor. And now deep growls, like distant thunder, almost drowned the roar of the panther. The lion and tiger, Judas and Cain, answered her from their dens at the back of the stage. On this frightful concert, with which his ears had been familiar in the midst of the solitudes of India, when he lay encamped for the purposes of the chase or of war, Djalma's blood boiled in his veins. His eyes sparkled with a wild ardor. Leaning a little forward, with both hands pressed on the front of the box, his whole body trembled with a convulsive shudder. The audience, the theatre, Adrienne herself, no longer existed for him: he was in a forest of his own lands, tracking the tiger.

Then there mingled with his beauty so intrepid and ferocious an expression, that Rose-Pompon looked at him with a sort of terror and passionate admiration. For the first time in her life, perhaps, her pretty blue eyes, generally so gay and mischievous, expressed a serious emotion. She could not explain what she felt; but her heart seemed tightened, and beat violently, as though some calamity were at hand.

Yielding to a movement of involuntary fear, she seized Djalma by the arm, and said to him, «Do not stare so into that cavern; you frighten me.»

Djalma did not hear what she said.

«Here he is! here he is!» murmured the crowd, almost with one voice, as Morok appeared at the back of the stage.

Dressed as we have described, Morok now carried in addition a bow and a long quiver full of arrows. He slowly descended the line of painted rocks, which came sloping down towards the centre of the stage. From time to time, he stopped as if to listen, and appeared to advance with caution. Looking from one side to the other, his eyes involuntarily encountered the large green eyes of the Englishman, whose box was close to the cavern. Instantly the lion-tamer's countenance was contracted in so frightful a manner that Lady Morinval, who was examining him closely with the aid of an excellent glass, said hastily to Adrienne, «My dear, the man is afraid. Some misfortune will happen.»

«How can accidents happen,» said Adrienne with a sardonic smile, «in the midst of this brilliant crowd, so well dressed and full of animation! Misfortunes here this evening! why, dear Julia, you do not think it. It is in darkness and solitude that misfortunes come,—never in the midst of a joyous crowd, and in all this blaze of light.»

«Good gracious, Adrienne! take care!» cried the marchioness, unable to repress an exclamation of alarm, and seizing her arm as if to draw her closer: «do you not see it?» And with a trembling hand she pointed to the cavern's mouth. Adrienne hastily bent forward, and looked in that direction. «Take care, do not lean forward so!» exclaimed Lady Morinval.

«Your terrors are nonsensical, my dear,» said the marquis to his wife. «The panther is securely chained; and even were it to break its chain, which is impossible, we are beyond its reach.»

A long murmur of trembling curiosity here ran through the house, and every eye was intently fixed on the cavern. From amongst the artificial brambles, which she abruptly pushed aside with her broad chest, the black panther suddenly appeared. Twice she stretched forth her flat head, illumined by yellow, flaming eyes; then, half opening her blood-red jaws, she uttered another roar, and exhibited two rows of formidable fangs. A double iron chain, and a collar also of iron, painted black, blended with the ebon shades of her hide, and with the darkness of the cavern. The illusion was complete, and the terrible animal seemed to be at liberty in her den.

« Ladies,» said the marquis suddenly, « look at those Indians. Their emotion makes them superb! »

In fact, the sight of the panther had raised the wild ardor of Djalma to its utmost pitch. His eyes sparkled in their pearly orbits like two black diamonds; his upper lip was curled convulsively with an expression of animal ferocity, as if he were in a violent paroxysm of rage.

Faringhea, now leaning on the front of the box, was also greatly excited, by reason of a strange coincidence. « That black panther of so rare a breed,» thought he, « which I see here at Paris upon a stage, must be the very one that the Malay» (the Thug who had tattooed Djalma at Java during his sleep) « took quite young from his den, and sold to a European captain. Bowanee's power is everywhere! » added the Thug, in his sanguinary superstition.

« Do you not think,» resumed the marquis, addressing Adrienne, « that those Indians are really splendid in their present attitude ? »

« Perhaps they may have seen such a hunt in their own country,» said Adrienne, as if she would recall and brave the most cruel remembrances.

«Adrienne,» said the marchioness suddenly, in an agitated voice, « the lion-tamer has now come nearer — is not his countenance fearful to look at ? I tell you he is afraid.»

« In truth,» observed the marquis, this time very seriously, « he is dreadfully pale, and seems to grow worse every minute, the nearer he approaches this side. It is said that were he to lose his presence of mind for a single moment, he would run the greatest danger.»

« Oh! it would be horrible,» cried the marchioness, addressing Adrienne, « if he were wounded — there — under our eyes! »

« Every wound does not kill,» replied her friend, with an accent of such cold indifference that the marchioness looked at her with surprise, and said to her, « My dear girl, what you say is cruel! »

"It is the air of the place that acts on me," answered Adrienne with an icy smile.

"Look! look! the lion-tamer is about to shoot his arrow at the panther," said the marquis suddenly. "No doubt he will next perform the hand-to-hand grapple."

Morok was at this moment in front of the stage, but he had yet to traverse its entire breadth to reach the cavern's mouth. He stopped an instant, adjusted an arrow to the string, knelt down behind a mass of rock, took deliberate aim — and then the arrow hissed across the stage, and was lost in the depths of the cavern, into which the panther had retired, after showing for a moment her threatening head to the audience. Hardly had the arrow disappeared, than Death, purposely irritated by Goliath (who was invisible), sent forth a howl of rage, as if she had been really wounded. Morok's actions became so expressive, he evinced so naturally his joy at having hit the wild beast, that a tempest of applause burst from every quarter of the house. Then throwing away his bow, he drew a dagger from his girdle, took it between his teeth, and began to crawl forward on hands and knees, as though he meant to surprise the wounded panther in his den. To render the illusion perfect, Death, again excited by Goliath, who struck him with an iron bar, sent forth frightful howlings from the depths of the cavern.

The gloomy aspect of the forest, only half lighted with a reddish glare, was so effective, the howlings of the panther were so furious, the gestures, attitude, and countenance of Morok were so expressive of terror, that the audience, attentive and trembling, now maintained a profound silence. Every one held his breath; and a kind of shudder came over the spectators, as though they expected some horrible event. What gave such a fearful air of truth to the pantomime of Morok was that, as he approached the cavern step by step, he approached also the Englishman's box. In spite of himself, the lion-tamer, fascinated by terror, could not take his eyes from the large green eyes of this man; and it seemed as if every one of the abrupt movements which he made in crawling along was produced by a species of magnetic attraction, caused by the fixed gaze of the fatal wagerer. Therefore the nearer Morok approached, the more ghastly and livid he became. At sight of this pantomime, which was no longer acting, but the real expression of intense fear, the deep and trembling silence which had reigned in the theatre was once more interrupted by cheers, with which were mingled the roarings of the panther, and the distant growls of the lion and tiger.

The Englishman leaned almost out of his box, with a frightful sardonic smile on his lip; and with his large eyes still fixed, panted for breath. The perspiration ran down his bald red forehead, as if he had really expended an incredible amount of magnetic power in attracting Morok, whom he now saw close to the cavern entrance. The moment was decisive. Crouching down with his dagger in his hand, following with eye and gesture every movement of Death,—who, roaring furiously, and opening wide her enormous jaws, seemed determined to guard the entrance of her den,—Morok waited for the moment to rush upon her. There is such fascination in danger, that Adrienne shared in spite of herself the feeling of painful curiosity, mixed with terror, that thrilled through all the spectators. Leaning forward like the marchioness, and gazing upon this scene of fearful interest, the lady still held mechanically in her hand the Indian bouquet preserved since the morning. Suddenly Morok raised a wild shout, as he rushed towards Death; who answered this exclamation by a dreadful roar, and threw herself upon her master with so much fury that Adrienne, in alarm, believing the man lost, drew herself back, and covered her face with her hands. Her flowers slipped from her grasp, and falling upon the stage, rolled into the cavern in which Morok was struggling with the panther.

Quick as lightning, supple and agile as a tiger, yielding to the intoxication of his love, and to the wild ardor excited in him by the roaring of the panther, Djalma sprang at one bound upon the stage, drew his dagger, and rushed into the cavern to recover Adrienne's nosegay. At that instant Morok, being wounded, uttered a dreadful cry for help; the panther, rendered still more furious at sight of Djalma, made the most desperate efforts to break her chain. Unable to succeed in doing so, she rose upon her hind legs, in order to seize Djalma, then within reach of her sharp claws. It was only by bending down his head, throwing himself on his knees, and twice plunging his dagger into her belly with the rapidity of lightning, that Djalma escaped certain death. The panther gave a howl, and fell with her whole weight upon the prince. For a second, during which lasted her terrible agony, nothing was seen but a confused and convulsive mass of black limbs, and white garments stained with blood: and then Djalma rose, pale, bleeding — for he was wounded; and standing erect, his eye flashing with savage pride, his foot on the body of the panther, he held in his hand Adrienne's bouquet, and cast towards her a glance which told the intensity of his love. Then only did Adrienne feel her strength fail her; for only superhuman courage had enabled her to watch all the terrible incidents of the struggle.

THE CHASTISEMENT

From 'The Wandering Jew'

It is night. The moon shines and the stars glimmer in the midst of a serene but cheerless sky; the sharp whistlings of the north wind — that fatal dry and icy breeze — ever and anon burst forth in violent gusts. With its harsh and cutting breath it sweeps the Heights of Montmartre. On the highest point of the hills a man is standing. His long shadow is cast upon the stony, moonlit ground. He gazes on the immense city which lies outspread beneath his feet,— Paris,— with the dark outline of its towers, cupolas, domes, and steeples, standing out from the limpid blue of the horizon, while from the midst of the ocean of masonry rises a luminous vapor, that reddens the starry azure of the sky. It is the distant reflection of the thousand fires which at night, the hour of pleasures, light up so joyously the noisy capital.

«No,» said the wayfarer: «it is not to be. The Lord will not exact it. Is not *twice* enough?

«Five centuries ago, the avenging hand of the Almighty drove me hither from the uttermost confines of Asia. A solitary traveler, I had left behind me more grief, despair, disaster, and death, than the innumerable armies of a hundred devastating conquerors. I entered this town, and it too was decimated.

«Again, two centuries ago, the inexorable hand which leads me through the world brought me once more hither; and then, as the time before, the plague, which the Almighty attaches to my steps, again ravaged this city, and fell first on my brethren, already worn out with labor and misery.

«My brethren — mine! — the cobbler of Jerusalem, the artisan accursed by the Lord, who in my person condemned the whole race of workmen, ever suffering, ever disinherited, ever in slavery, toiling on like me, without rest or pause, without recompense or hope, till men, women, and children, young and old, all die beneath the same iron yoke,— that murderous yoke, which others take in their turn, thus to be borne from age to age on the submissive and bruised shoulders of the masses.

«And now, for the third time in five centuries, I reach the summit of one of the hills that overlook the city. And perhaps I again bring with me fear, desolation, and death.

«Yet this city, intoxicated with the sounds of its joys and its nocturnal revelries, does not know — oh! does not know that *I* am at its gates.

«But no, no! my presence will not be a new calamity. The Lord, in his impenetrable views, has hitherto led me through France so as to avoid the humblest hamlet; and the sound of the funeral knell has not accompanied my passage.

«And moreover, the spectre has left me — the green, livid spectre, with its hollow bloodshot eyes. When I touched the soil of France, its damp and icy hand was no longer clasped in mine — and it disappeared.

«And yet I feel that the atmosphere of death is around me.

«The sharp whistlings of that fatal wind cease not, which, catching me in their whirl, seem to propagate blasting and mildew as they blow.

«But perhaps the wrath of the Lord is appeased, and my presence here is only a threat — to be communicated in some way to those whom it should intimidate.

«Yes; for otherwise he would smite with a fearful blow, by first scattering terror and death here in the heart of the country, in the bosom of this immense city!

«Oh! no, no! the Lord will be merciful. No! he will not condemn me to this new torture.

«Alas! in this city, my brethren are more numerous and miserable than elsewhere. And should I be their messenger of death?

«No! the Lord will have pity. For, alas! the seven descendants of my sister have at length met in this town. And to them likewise should I be the messenger of death, instead of the help they so much need?

"For that woman, who like me wanders from one border of the earth to the other, after having once more rent asunder the nets of their enemies, has gone forth upon her endless journey.

"In vain she foresaw that new misfortunes threatened my sister's family. The invisible hand that drives me on, drives *her* on also.

"Carried away, as of old, by the irresistible whirlwind, at the moment of leaving my kindred to their fate, she in vain cried with supplicating tone: 'Let me at least, O Lord, complete my task!'—'Go ON!'—'A few days, in mercy, only a few poor days!'—'Go ON!'—'I leave those I love on the brink of the abyss!'—'Go ON! Go ON!'

"And the wandering star again started on its eternal round. And her voice, passing through space, called me to the assistance of my own.

"When that voice reached me, I knew that the descendants of my sister were still exposed to frightful perils. Those perils are even now on the increase.

"Tell me, O Lord! will they escape the scourge which for so many centuries has weighed down our race?

"Wilt thou pardon me in them? wilt thou punish me in them? Oh that they might obey the last will of their ancestor!

"Oh that they might join together their charitable hearts, their valor and their strength, their noble intelligence, and their great riches!

"They would then labor for the future happiness of humanity —they would thus, perhaps, redeem me from my eternal punishment!

"The words of the Son of Man, 'LOVE YE ONE ANOTHER,' will be their only end, their only means.

"By the help of those all-powerful words they will fight and conquer the false priests who have renounced the precepts of love, peace, and hope, for lessons of hatred, violence, and despair; those false priests who, kept in pay by the powerful and happy of this world, their accomplices in every age, instead of asking here below for some slight share of well-being for my unfortunate brethren, dare in thy name, O Lord God, to assert that the poor are condemned to endless suffering in this world, and that the desire or the hope to suffer less is a crime in thine eyes,—

because the happiness of the few, and the misery of nearly the whole human race, is (oh, blasphemy!) according to thy will. Is not the very contrary of those murderous words alone worthy of Divinity!

«In mercy, hear me, Lord! Rescue from their enemies the descendants of my sister — the artisan as the king's son. Do not let them destroy the germ of so mighty and fruitful an association, which, with thy blessing, would make an epoch in the annals of human happiness!

«Let me unite them, O Lord, since others would divide them; defend them, since others attack: let me give hope to those who have ceased to hope, courage to those who are brought low with fear; let me raise up the falling, and sustain those who persevere in the way of the righteous!

«And peradventure their struggles, devotion, virtue, and grief may expiate my fault — that of a man whom misfortune alone rendered unjust and wicked.

«Oh! since thy Almighty hand hath led me hither,— to what end I know not,— lay aside thy wrath, I beseech thee; let me be no longer the instrument of thy vengeance!

«Enough of woe upon the earth! for the last two years, thy creatures have fallen by thousands upon my track. The world is decimated. A veil of mourning extends over all the globe.

«From Asia to the icy Pole, they died upon the path of the wanderer. Dost thou not hear the long-drawn sigh that rises from the earth unto thee, O Lord?

«Mercy for all! mercy for me! Let me but unite the descendants of my sister for a single day, and they will be saved!»

As he pronounced these words, the wayfarer sank upon his knees, and raised to heaven his supplicating hands. Suddenly the wind blew with redoubled violence; its sharp whistlings were changed into the roar of a tempest.

The traveler shuddered; in a voice of terror he exclaimed: —

«The blast of death rises in its fury — the whirlwind carries me on. Lord! thou art then deaf to my prayer?

«The spectre! oh, the spectre! it is again here! its green face twitching with convulsive spasms — its red eyes rolling in their orbits. Begone! begone! — its hand, oh! its icy hand has again laid hold of mine. Have mercy, heaven!» — «Go on!»

«O Lord! the pestilence — the terrible plague — must I carry it into this city? And my brethren will perish the first — they, who are so sorely smitten even now! Mercy!» — «Go ON!»

«And the descendants of my sister. Mercy! Mercy!» — «Go ON!»

«O Lord, have pity! — I can no longer keep my ground; the spectre drags me to the slope of the hill; my walk is rapid as the deadly blast that rages behind me; already do I behold the city gates. Have mercy, Lord, on the descendants of my sister! Spare them; do not make me their executioner; let them triumph over their enemies!» — «Go ON! Go ON!»

«The ground flies beneath my feet; there is the city gate. Lord, it is yet time! Oh, mercy for that sleeping town! Let it not waken to cries of terror, despair, and death! Lord, I am on the threshold. Must it be? — Yes, it is done. Paris, the plague is in thy bosom. The curse — oh, the eternal curse!» — «Go ON! Go ON! Go ON!»

SUETONIUS

(EARLY PART OF SECOND CENTURY A. D.)

CAIUS SUETONIUS TRANQUILLUS passed his manhood under Trajan and Hadrian, and so was contemporary with the younger Pliny and with Tacitus. As private secretary to the Emperor Hadrian, he probably had access to State archives if he chose to consult them; and heard the traditional stories of court life, which, though mostly inaccurate, indicated vividly the character and life of the early Cæsars. Where Tacitus is lost, Suetonius becomes our chief authority for the 'Lives of the Cæsars,' from Julius to Domitian. The first six are much the more fully treated; whether because as he approached his own time he wearied of his task, found less alien material ready to be appropriated, or felt the ground less secure beneath him.

SUETONIUS

Suetonius is a writer quite devoid of earnest purpose, dignity, or literary charm. He is usually clear and straightforward enough in style. His warmest interest is excited by a scandalous bit of gossip. He makes little effort at chronological treatment of public events. Altogether, he is an author whom historians must know and use, and whom even the general reader will find sufficiently interesting; but we can take no pride in our enjoyment of his ignoble recitals, and must hope that the rather vivid general picture he draws is essentially untrue. Modern recorders of life in royal palaces would at least feel impelled to use the darker tints less constantly.

In meagre and fragmentary form we have also from Suetonius several lives of literary men, notably those of Horace and Terence. The biography of Pliny the Younger is pronounced spurious: a pity, because our pleasantest glimpses of the man Suetonius are obtained from the courtly letter-writer. In particular, Pliny writes Trajan that his friend is «an upright and learned gentleman, whom folk often desire to remember in their wills.» As a childless married man, Suetonius cannot legally receive such legacies, unless a special dispensation shall accord him the rights properly reserved for the fathers of three children. This favor the Emperor, it appears, readily granted.

The best literary edition of Suetonius is that with Latin notes in the Lemaire collection (Paris, 1828). The lives of Julius and Augustus are edited with full commentary by Professor H. T. Peck (New York, 2d ed., 1893). The most recent translation is by Thomson and Forester (London, 1881).

CALIGULA'S MADNESS

HE USED also to complain aloud of the state of the times, because it was not rendered remarkable by any public calamities; for while the reign of Augustus had been made memorable to posterity by the disaster of Varus, and that of Tiberius by the fall of the theatre at Fidenæ, his was likely to pass into oblivion, from an uninterrupted series of prosperity. And at times he wished for some terrible slaughter of his troops, a famine, a pestilence, conflagrations, or an earthquake.

Even in the midst of his diversions, while gaming or feasting, this savage ferocity, both in his language and actions, never forsook him. Persons were often put to the torture in his presence, whilst he was dining or carousing. A soldier who was an adept in the art of beheading used at such times to take off the heads of prisoners, who were brought in for that purpose. At Puteoli, at the dedication of the bridge which he planned, as already mentioned, he invited a number of people to come to him from the shore, and then suddenly threw them headlong into the sea; thrusting down with poles and oars those who, to save themselves, had got hold of the rudders of the ships. At Rome, in a public feast, a slave having stolen some thin plates of silver with which the couches were inlaid, he delivered him immediately to an executioner, with orders to cut off his hands, and lead him round the guests with them hanging from his neck before his breast, and a label, signifying the cause of his punishment. A gladiator who was practicing with him, and voluntarily threw himself at his feet, he stabbed with a poniard, and then ran about with a palm branch in his hand, after the manner of those who are victorious in the games. When a victim was to be offered upon an altar, he, clad in the habit of the Popæ, and holding the axe aloft for a while, at last slaughtered, instead of the animal, an officer who attended to cut up the sacrifice. And at a sumptuous entertainment he fell suddenly into a violent fit of laughter; and upon the consuls who reclined next to him respectfully asking him the occasion.—"Nothing," replied he, "but that upon a single nod of mine you might both have your throats cut."

Among many other jests, this was one: As he stood by the statue of Jupiter, he asked Apelles the tragedian which of them he thought was biggest? Upon his demurring about it, he lashed him most severely; now and then commending his voice, whilst he entreated for mercy, as being well modulated even when he was venting his grief. As often as he kissed the neck of his wife or mistress, he would say, "So beautiful a throat must be cut whenever I please;" and now and then he would threaten to put his dear Cæsonia to the torture, that he might discover why he loved her so passionately.

In his behavior towards men of almost all ages, he discovered a degree of jealousy and malignity equal to that of his cruelty and pride. He so demolished and dispersed the statues of several illustrious persons,—which had been removed by Augustus, for want of room, from the court of the Capitol into the Campus Martius,—that it was impossible to set them up again with their inscriptions entire. And for the future, he forbade any statue whatever to be erected without his knowledge and leave. He had thoughts too of suppressing Homer's poems; for "Why," said he, "may not I do what Plato has done before me, who excluded him from his commonwealth?" He was likewise very near banishing the writings and the busts of Virgil and Livy from all libraries: censuring one of them as "a man of no genius and very little learning," and the other as "a verbose and careless historian." He often talked of the lawyers as if he intended to abolish their profession. "By Hercules!" he would say, "I shall put it out of their power to answer any legal questions otherwise than by referring to me!"

He took from the noblest persons in the city the ancient marks of distinction used by their families: as the collar from Torquatus; from Cincinnatus the curl of hair; and from Cneius Pompey the surname of *Great*, belonging to that ancient family. Ptolemy, mentioned before, whom he invited from his kingdom, and received with great honors, he suddenly put to death; for no other reason but because he observed that upon entering the theatre, at a public exhibition, he attracted the eyes of all the spectators by the splendor of his purple robe. As often as he met with handsome men who had fine heads of hair, he would order the back of their heads to be shaved, to make them appear ridiculous. There was one Esius Proculus, the son of a centurion of the first rank, who, for his great stature and fine proportions, was called the Colossal. Him he ordered to be dragged from his seat in the arena, and matched with a gladiator in light armor, and afterwards with another completely armed; and upon his worsting them both, commanded him forthwith to be bound, to be led clothed in rags up and down the streets of the city, and after being exhibited in that plight to the women, to be then butchered. There was no man of so abject or mean condition, whose excellency in any kind he did not envy.

COWARDICE AND DEATH OF NERO

On the arrival of the news that the rest of the armies had declared against him, he tore to pieces the letters which were delivered to him at dinner, overthrew the table, and dashed with violence against the ground two favorite cups, which he called Homer's because some of that poet's verses were cut upon them. Then taking from Locusta a dose of poison, which he put up in a golden box, he went into the Servilian gardens: and thence dispatching a trusty freedman to Ostia, with orders to make ready a fleet, he endeavored to prevail with some tribunes and centurions of the prætorian guards to attend him in his flight; but part of them showing no great inclination to comply, others absolutely refusing, and one of them crying out aloud,—

"Usque adeone mori miserum est?"
[Say, is it then so sad a thing to die?]

he was in great perplexity whether he should submit himself to Galba, or apply to the Parthians for protection, or else appear before the people dressed in mourning, and upon the rostra, in the most piteous manner, beg pardon for his past misdemeanors, and if he could not prevail, request of them to grant him at least the government of Egypt. A speech to this purpose was afterwards found in his writing-case. But it is conjectured that he durst not venture upon this project, for fear of being torn to pieces before he could get to the forum. Deferring therefore his resolution until the next day, he awoke about midnight, and finding the guards withdrawn, he leaped out of bed, and sent round for his friends. But none of them vouchsafing any message in reply, he went with a few attendants to their houses. The doors being everywhere shut, and no one giving him any answer, he returned to his bed-chamber, whence those who had the charge of it had all now eloped; some having gone one way and some another, carrying off with them his bedding and box of poison. He then endeavored to find Spicillus the gladiator, or some one, to kill him; but not being able to procure any one, « What! » said he, « have I then neither friend nor foe? » and immediately ran out, as if he would throw himself into the Tiber.

But this furious impulse subsiding, he wished for some place of privacy, where he might collect his thoughts; and his freedman Phaon offering him his country-house, between the Salarian and Nomentan roads, about four miles from the city, he mounted a horse, barefoot as he was and in his tunic, only slipping over it an old soiled cloak; with his head muffled up, and a handkerchief before his face, and four persons only to attend him, of whom Sporus was one. He was suddenly struck with horror by an earthquake, and by a flash of lightning which darted full in his face; and heard from the neighboring camp the shouts of the soldiers, wishing his destruction, and prosperity to Galba. He also heard a traveler they met on the road say, « They are in pursuit of Nero; » and another ask, « Is there any news in the city about Nero? » Uncovering his face when his horse was started by the scent of a carcass which lay in the road, he was recognized and saluted by an old soldier who had been discharged from the guards. When they came to the lane which turned up to the house, they quitted their horses, and with much difficulty he wound among bushes and briers, and along a track through a bed of rushes, over which they spread their cloaks for him to walk on. Having reached a wall at the back of the villa, Phaon advised him to hide himself awhile in a sand-pit; when he replied, « I will not go underground alive. » Staying there some little time, while preparations were made for bringing him privately into the villa, he took up in his hand some water out of a neighboring tank, to drink, saying, « This is Nero's distilled water. » Then, his cloak having been torn by the brambles, he pulled out the thorns which stuck in it. At last, being admitted, creeping upon his hands and knees through a hole made for him in the wall, he lay down in the first closet he came to, upon a miserable pallet, with an old coverlet thrown over it; and being both hungry and thirsty, though he refused some coarse bread that was brought him, he drank a little warm water.

All who surrounded him now pressing him to save himself from the indignities which were ready to befall him, he ordered a pit to be sunk before his eyes, of the size of his body, and the bottom to be covered with pieces of marble put together, if any could be found about the house; and water and wood to be got ready for immediate use about his corpse: weeping at everything that was done, and frequently saying, « What an artist is now about to perish! » Meanwhile, letters being brought in by a servant belonging to Phaon, he snatched them out of his hand and there read, « That he had been declared an enemy by the Senate; and that search was making for him, that he might be punished according to the ancient custom of the Romans. » He then inquired what kind of punishment that was; and being told that the practice was to strip the criminal naked and scourge him to death, while his neck was fastened within a forked stake, he was so terrified that he took up two daggers which he had brought with him, and after feeling the points of both, put them up again, saying, « The fatal hour has not yet come. » One while, he begged of Sporus to begin to wail and lament; another while, he entreated that one of them would set him an example by killing himself; and then again, he condemned his own want of resolution in these words: « I yet live, to my shame and disgrace: this is not becoming for Nero; it is not becoming. Thou oughtest in such circumstances to have a good heart. Come then; courage, man! » The horsemen who had received orders to bring him away alive, were now approaching the house. As soon as he heard them coming, he uttered with a trembling voice the following verse:—

Ἵππων μ᾽ ὠκυπόδων ἀμφὶ κτύπος οὔατα βάλλει·

(The noise of swift-heeled steeds assails my ears;)

he then drove a dagger into his throat, being assisted in the act by his secretary Epaphroditus. A centurion bursting in just as he was dying, and applying his cloak to the wound, pretending that he was come to his assistance, he made no other reply but this: « 'Tis too late, » and « Is this your loyalty? » Immediately after pronouncing these words he expired, with his eyes fixed and starting out of his head, to the terror of all who beheld him.

VITELLIUS

HE WAS chiefly addicted to the vices of luxury and cruelty. He always made three meals a day, sometimes four; breakfast, dinner, and supper, and a drunken revel after all. . . . For these several meals he would make different appointments at the houses of his friends on the same day. None ever entertained him at less expense than 400,000 sesterces [over $20,000]. The most famous was a set entertainment given him by his brother, at which, it is said, there were served up no less than two thousand choice fishes and seven thousand birds. Yet even this supper he himself outdid, at a feast he gave on the first use of a dish which had been made for him, and which for its extraordinary size he called "The Shield of Minerva." In this dish were tossed up together the livers of char-fish, the brains of pheasants and peacocks, the tongues of flamingoes, and the entrails of lampreys, which had been brought in ships of war as far as from the Carpathian Sea and the Spanish Straits. He was not only a man of insatiable appetite, but would gratify it at the most unseasonable times, and with any garbage that came in his way. . . .

He delighted in the infliction of punishments, even capital ones, without any distinction of persons or occasions. Several noblemen, his schoolfellows and companions, invited by him to court, he treated with such flattering caresses as seemed to indicate an affection short only of admitting them to share the honors of the imperial dignity; yet he put them all to death by some base means or other. To one he gave poison with his own hand, in a cup of cold water which he called for in a fever. He scarcely spared one of all the usurers, notaries, and publicans who had ever demanded a debt of him at Rome, or any toll or custom on the road. One of these, while in the very act of saluting him, he ordered for execution, but immediately sent for him back; upon which all about him applauding his clemency, he commanded him to be slain in his own presence, saying, "I have a mind to feed my eyes." Two sons who interceded for their father, he ordered to be executed with him. A Roman knight, upon his being dragged away for execution, and crying out to him, "You are my heir," he desired to produce his will; and finding that he had made his freedman joint heir with him, he commanded that both he and the freedman should have their throats cut.

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